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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

Plants to brighten WINTER DAYS

Eat and drink the hedgerow

GROW AN EDIBLE HEDGE

HOW TO garden more sustainably

Plus

The best indoor terrariums

23 essential Christmas presents for gardeners

Make an oversized festive wreath

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Editor's letter

At the heart of gardening sustainably is forward thinking; one foot in the garden and the other in next week, next month, ten years ahead. Buying less but better, recycling what we once considered to be single-use, plastic plant pots, planting thoughtfully and using horticulture rather than chemicals to keep soil in good health. In this issue of *Gardens Illustrated*, garden designer Marian Boswall also considers the importance of thoughtful, functional design in a gentle approach to gardening, where pathways take the most obvious route and well-chosen materials, which will eventually meld back into the land, are beautifully crafted.

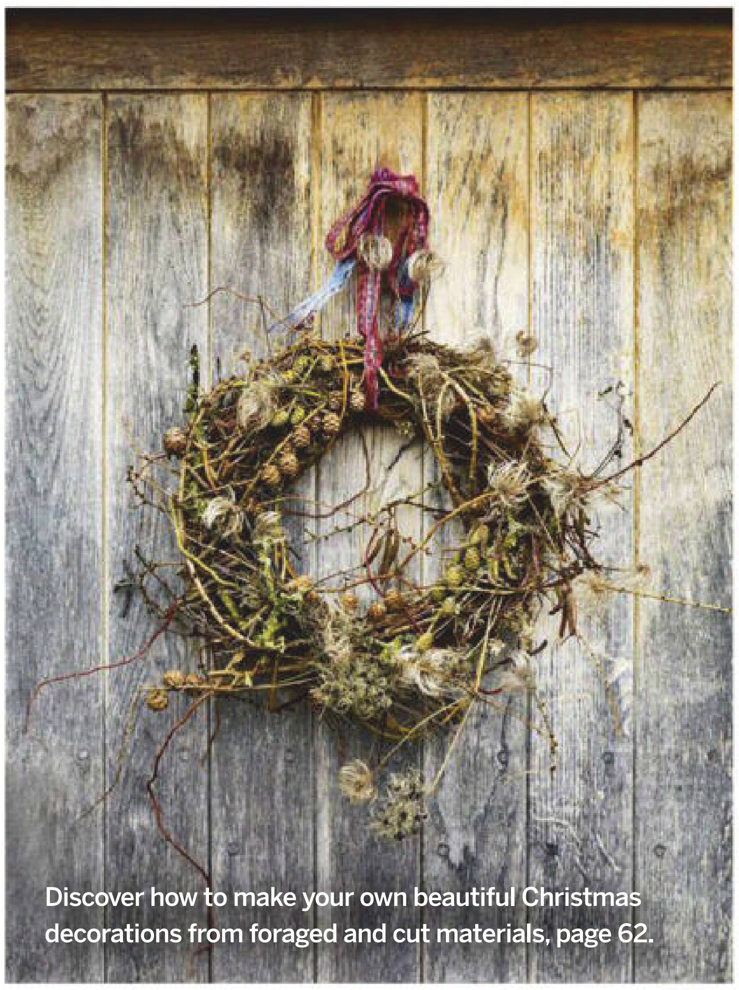
For foragers a hedgerow is a feast of good eating and treats for the larder. On page 44 Alys Fowler recommends the best woody shrubs to choose for an edible hedgerow in the garden, noting those that respond well to clipping and work in smaller spaces as well as those for wilder, country gardens. Think crab apples, hazelnuts and a blackberry with the finest flavour going, without the need to leave the garden and venture further afield.

This issue also includes our favourite Christmas presents for gardeners, with an emphasis on durability, utility good craftsmanship and delight, plus sustainable ideas for Christmas decorations including a wreath inspired by a bird's nest and an oversized, evergreen wreath for the wall.

I wish you a very happy Christmas and hope that you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR



ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Discover how to make your own beautiful Christmas decorations from foraged and cut materials, page 62.

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JASON INGRAM

Camellia sasanqua 'Crimson King', is one of the many plants still bringing colour to the garden in midwinter, page 24.

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SEE PAGE 30

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Hamamelis x *intermedia*
'Robert'
by Jason Ingram

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EVENTS AND OFFERS

- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition of *Gardens Illustrated* – page 30
- Book now for next year's Australian Landscape Conference, with its lineup of interntional speakers – page 88
- Win all 15 of our gardening books of the year† – page 95

†Competition open to UK residents only.

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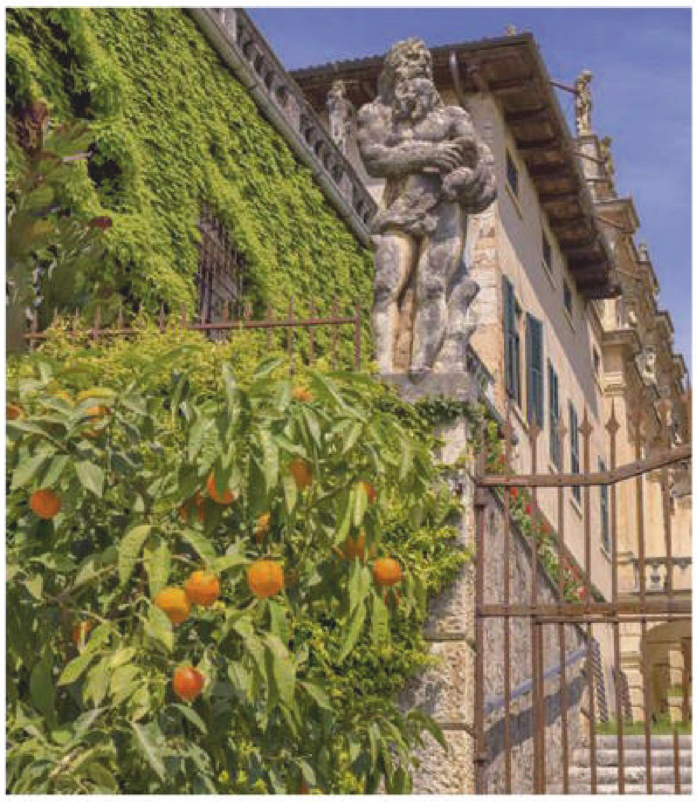

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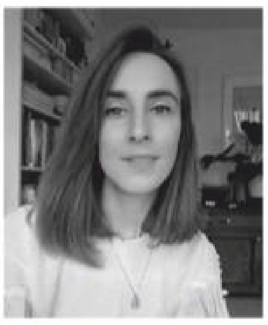

Charlie Ryrie
Charlie creates three Christmas projects, page 62. *"Handmade decorations are joyfully personal, and it's particularly satisfying to create them using only garden materials, snips and twine."*

Marian Boswall
Marian rounds off her design ideas series by looking at gardens that endure, page 82. *"My last piece in this mini series looks at how we can make gardens that stand the test of time."*

Agata Wierzbicka
Agata illustrates our monthly houseplant feature, page 106. *"I'm always amazed at how a much-loved houseplant can start to feel like a good friend – bringing a lot of joy for a little bit of care."*

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ANDREW MONTGOMERY

James Basson
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

Fergus Garrett
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

Anna Pavord
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

Sarah Price
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who gained worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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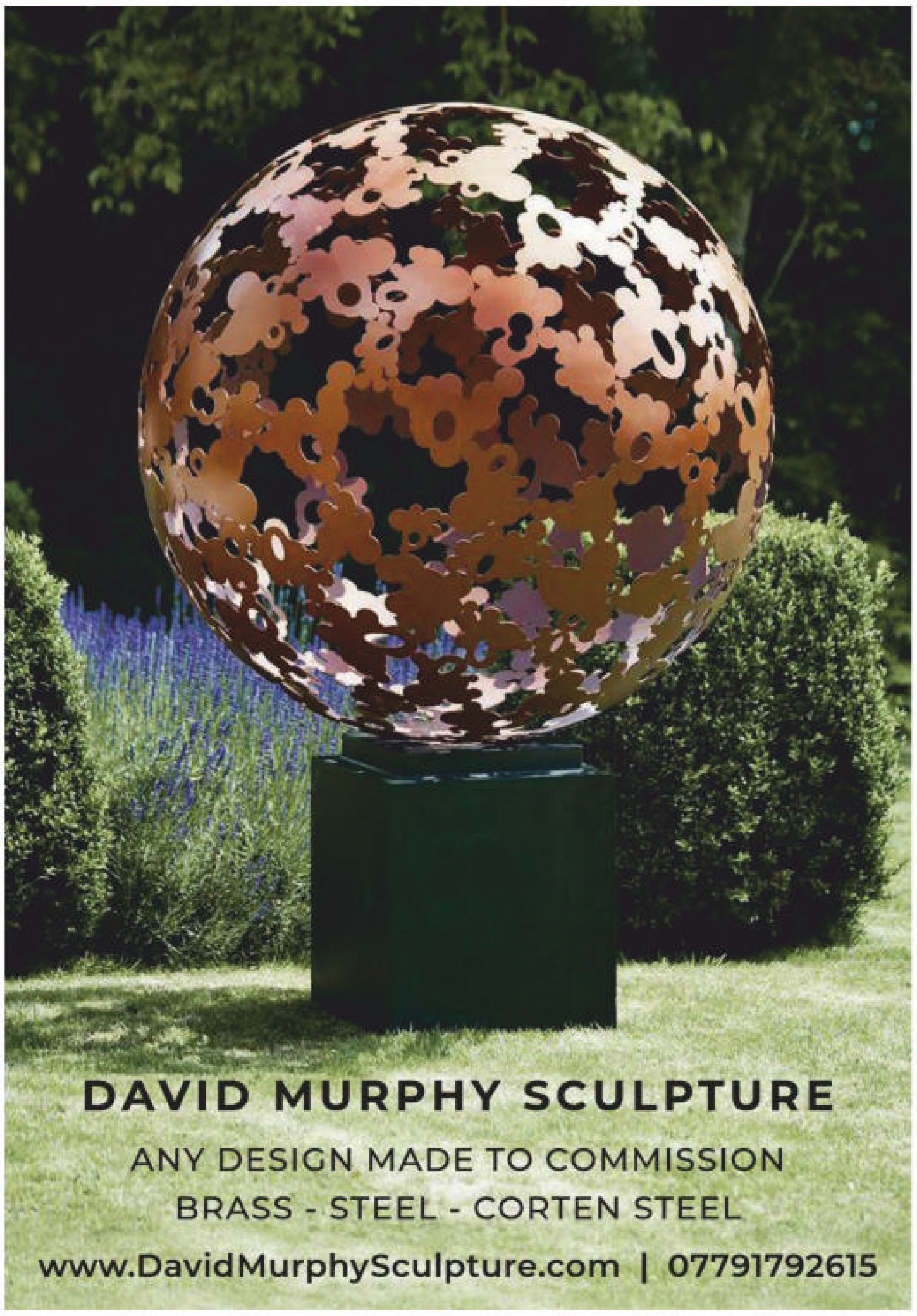

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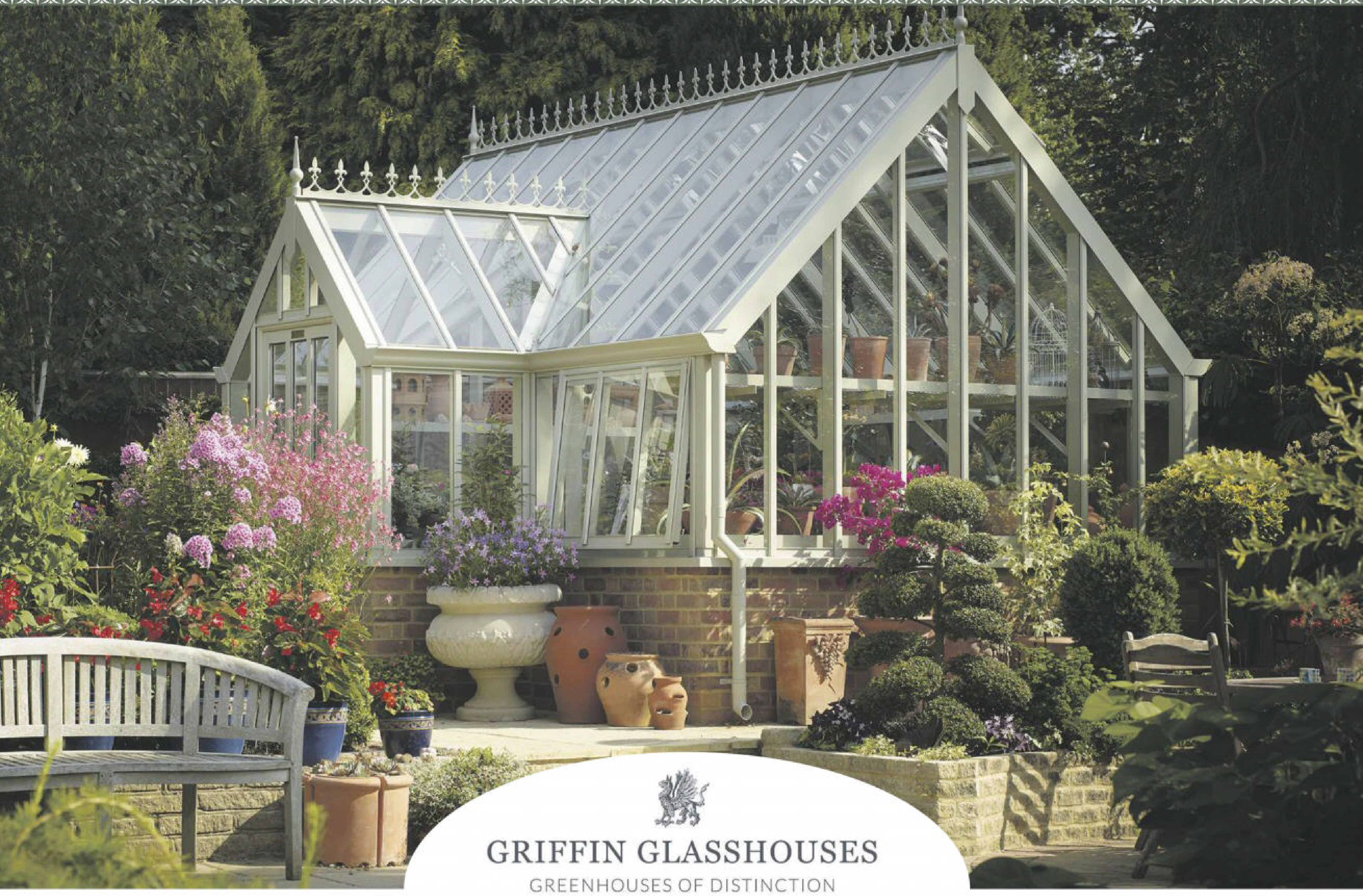

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Dig in

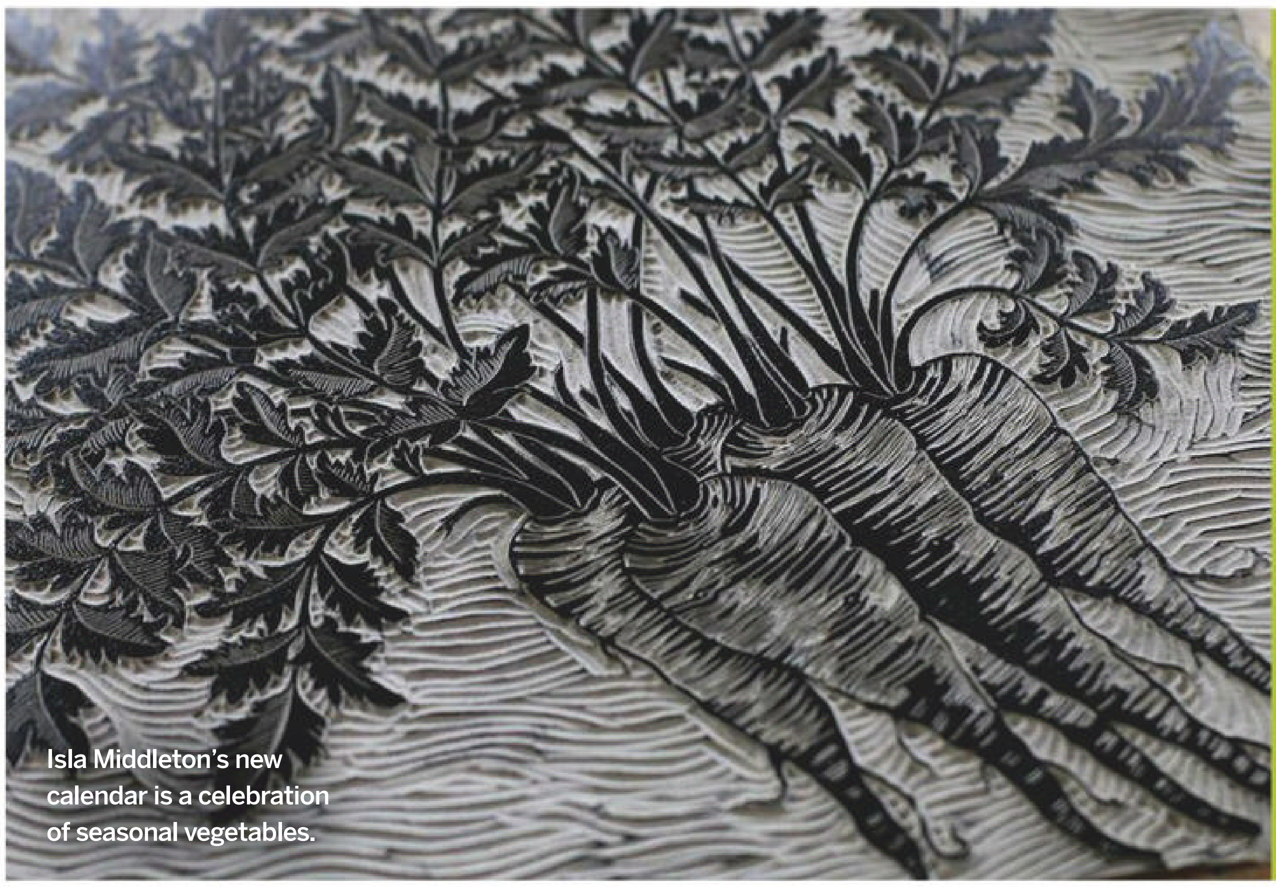
What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

Common thread

When weaver Emily Mackey accepted a commission from The Shop Floor Project to produce a series of handwoven cushions, she probably didn't expect to find herself roaming around Great Dixter's compost heaps on a freezing January morning. But her trip to the famous garden, even in the depths of winter, proved inspirational. Elements of the tall winter grasses, the log piles, even the timber of the house itself have worked their way into her four modernist designs, which demonstrates the beauty of simplicity. The six subtle colourways also capture the essence of the garden on a winter's day and have a direct link to the garden as the dyes were created using natural plant matter collected at Great Dixter. Prices start at £145. **theshopfloorproject.com**

News

COMPILED BY JULIET GILES



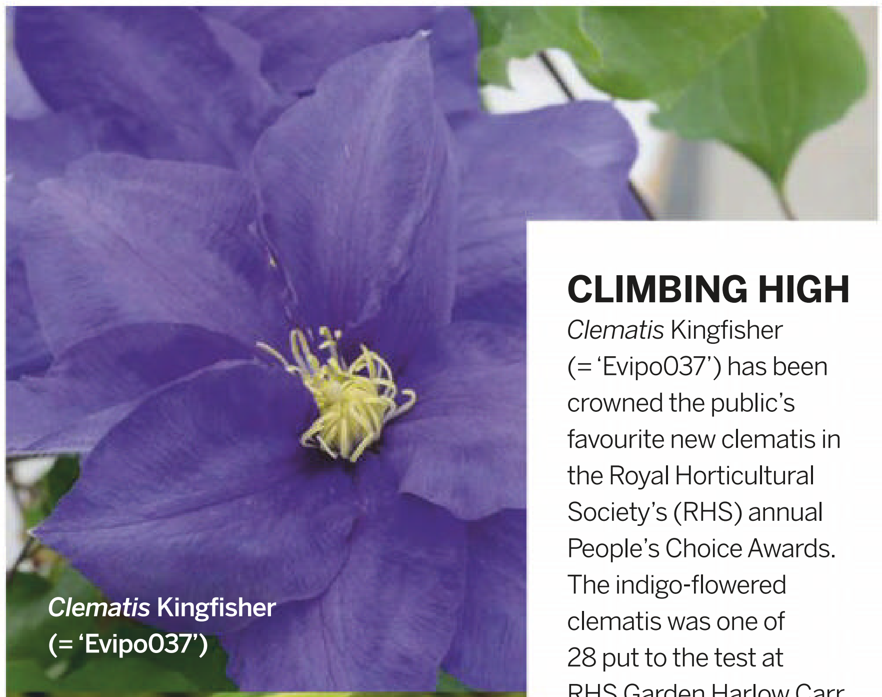
Isla Middleton's new calendar is a celebration of seasonal vegetables.

A full year of growth

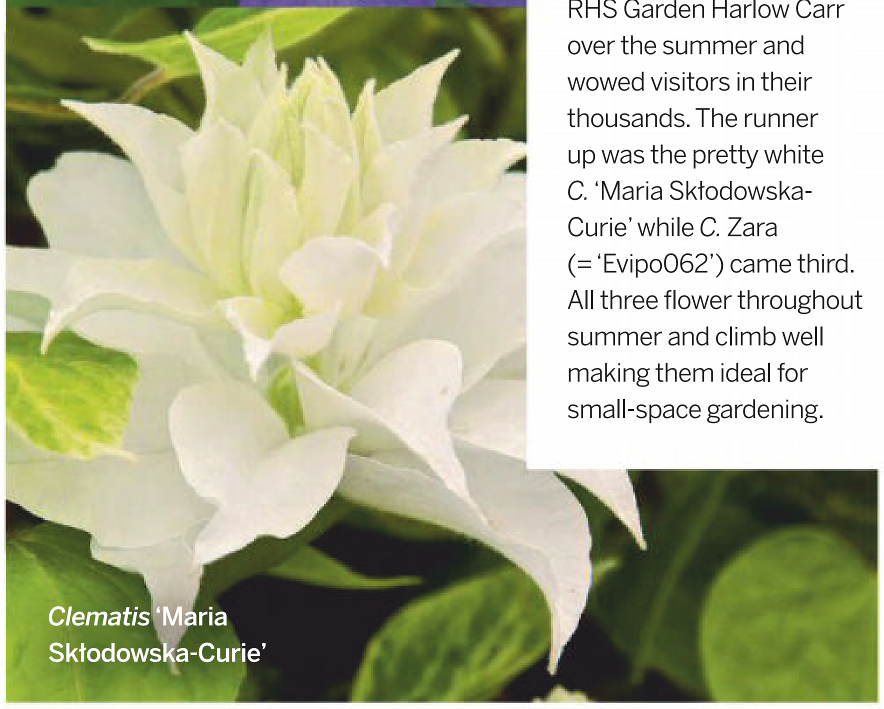
Best known for her exquisite textile designs for the likes of Zoffany and Morris & Co, artist and printmaker Isla Middleton has now teamed up with her sister Bryony to create a calendar for 2020 that is both a beautiful work of art and a practical guide for gardeners. Bryony, who is head gardener at Sharpham Estate in Devon, has written text to accompany Isla's original hand-carved linocut prints that offers expert advice on what to sow, grow and harvest each month, so you can plan your gardening year from seed to harvest. Alongside monthly tips there is also a useful growing chart at the back. Printed on recycled, kraft brown paper and using eco inks, the calendar costs £14 from **islamiddleton.co.uk**

Nice work

Are you looking to further your career in horticulture? All of the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens at Harlow Carr, Hyde Hall, Rosemoor and Wisley are offering one-year specialist horticultural placements in 2020. Aimed at existing horticulturists, the work-based placements offer the opportunity to develop skills within a particular area of the garden or with a specialist group of plants. RHS Garden Wisley also has places for its RHS Level 4 Diploma in Horticultural Practice, for those who already have an RHS Level 2 in horticulture and would like to gain a further qualification. Applications for both open on 1 December 2019. For more information visit **rhs.org.uk**



Clematis Kingfisher (= 'Evipo037')



Clematis 'Maria Skłodowska-Curie'

CLIMBING HIGH

Clematis Kingfisher (= 'Evipo037') has been crowned the public's favourite new clematis in the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) annual People's Choice Awards. The indigo-flowered clematis was one of 28 put to the test at RHS Garden Harlow Carr over the summer and wowed visitors in their thousands. The runner up was the pretty white *C.* 'Maria Skłodowska-Curie' while *C.* Zara (= 'Evipo062') came third. All three flower throughout summer and climb well making them ideal for small-space gardening.

RHS; RHS TIM SANDALL; RAYMOND EVISON

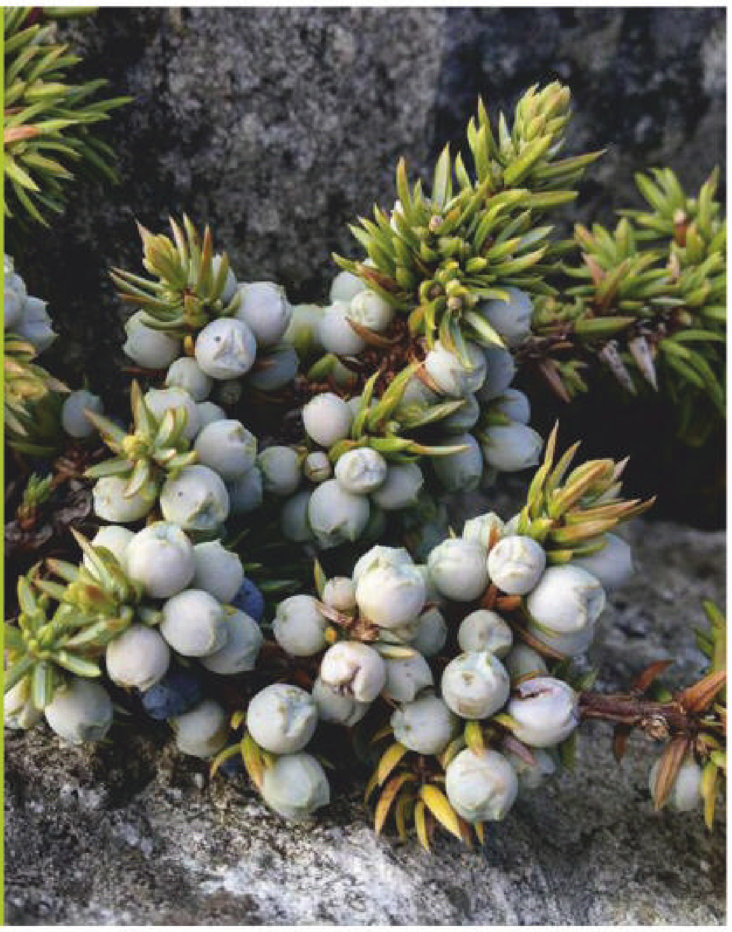
Bathers enjoying the opening of Hyde Park's Serpentine Lido in 1930.

Park life

The Royal Parks have long offered Londoners a green place to escape the stress of the city, but over the centuries they've become far more than a sanctuary for the capital's ever-evolving population. They've been a meeting place for political protest and been at the heart of national celebrations, from jousts enjoyed by Henry VIII in Greenwich Park, to the world's biggest children's party held in Hyde Park in 1979. Now a new exhibition, *Play, Protest And Pelicans: A People's History of London's Royal Parks*, at the Garden Museum in London explores their secret histories, from royal hunting grounds to debauched pleasure gardens, and features paintings, drawings and photographs from the Hearsum Collection, the Royal Collection Trust, the Royal Museums Greenwich and the Museum of London that bring the fascinating history to life. 20 November – 9 February, £10. **gardenmuseum.org.uk**

BACK IN FLAVOUR

Good news for gin lovers. Populations of English juniper are on the rise. The native shrub that gives gin its unique, aromatic flavour had been declining, but thanks to efforts of conservation charity Plantlife, the trend has been reversed. Plantlife is also adding to the growing list of artisan gins by partnering with Maidstone Distillery to create one flavoured with ingredients foraged from its nature reserve at Ranscombe Farm. The gin, Ranscombe Wild, should be on sale early next year. **plantlife.org.uk**



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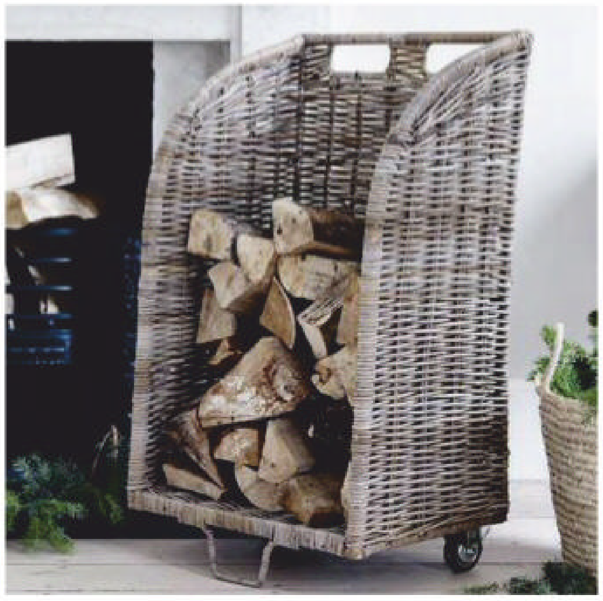

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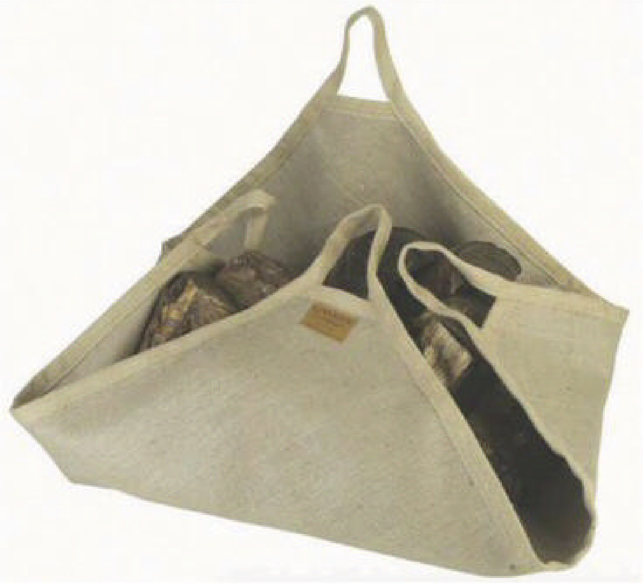

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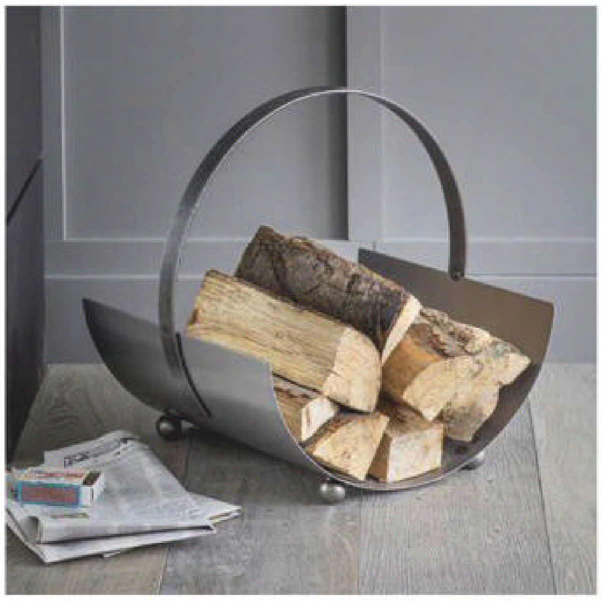

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Diary

COMPILED BY JULIET GILES AND ANNIE GATTI

❶ Gardening for Wildlife
Get a head start on your New Year resolution to increase your garden knowledge by signing up for this new online course from Learning with Experts in partnership with the RHS. Led by Andy McIndoe, the four-lecture Gardening for Wildlife course shows how to make your garden attractive to wildlife, with ideas on plants to suit your garden. learningwithexperts.com

❷ Winter Sculpture Exhibition
Don't miss RHS Rosemoor's annual sculpture exhibition. This year the exhibition will see a host of new artists and includes a specially commissioned piece by Stan Jankowski. 14 November – 31 January 2020, 10am-5pm. Normal garden admission. RHS Garden Rosemoor, Great Torrington, Devon EX38 8PH. Tel 01805 624067, rhs.org.uk/rosemoor

❸ Chelsea Physic Garden's Annual Christmas Fair
Kick off the festive period with a visit to the Chelsea Physic Garden's Christmas Fair. The annual celebration will host more than 100 stands, along with carol singing and wreath-making workshops. Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, London SW3 4HS. 22-24 November, 10am-5pm. £7. Tel 020 7352 5646, chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk

❹ Wildegoose Winter Weekends
Don't miss the festive weekend at Wildegoose Nursery. There's the chance to explore the winter gardens, find great gifts for gardeners and, on Sunday, take part in a Christmas Wreath workshop. 30 November – 1 December, 10am-3.30pm. Admission free. Lower Millichope, The Walled Garden, Munslow, Shropshire SY7 9HE. Tel 01584 841890, wildegoosenursery.co.uk

❺ Willow Christmas Tree Workshop
Learn how to weave a traditional 3D Christmas tree on this festive course with expert willow weaver Nicki Rowling. All materials will be provided on the day. 2 December, 1.45-4.15pm. £65. RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 01483 224234, rhs.org.uk

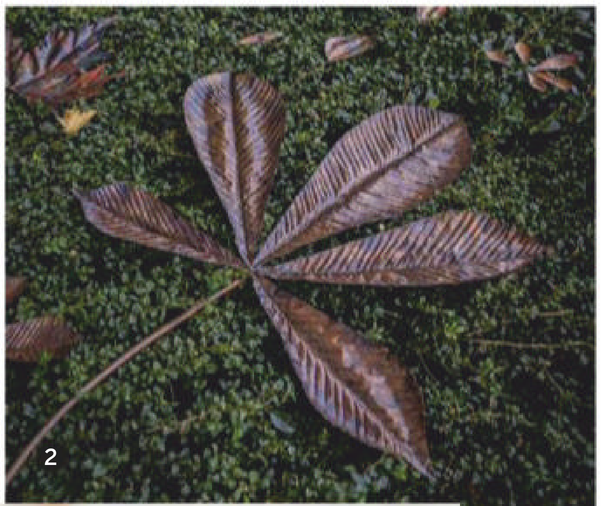
❻ Traditional Mossed Christmas Wreaths and Garlands
Spend a festive day creating beautiful additions to your home or the perfect Christmas gift. Create a gorgeous wreath for your door using garden and hedgerow foliage and a garland for your mantelpiece or staircase. 6 December, 10.30am-3.30pm. £55. Scampston, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 8NG. Tel 01944 759111, scampston.co.uk

❼ Christmas Walk
Join Bodnant Garden's head gardener for a guided walk around the gardens followed by a Christmas lunch. 12 December, 11am-2pm. £30, plus normal garden entry. Bodnant Garden, Tal-y-Cafn, near Colwyn Bay, Conwy, Clwyd LL28 5RE. Tel 01492 650460, nationaltrust.org.uk/bodnant-garden

❽ Table and Mantelpiece Arrangements
Learn how to make table and mantelpiece arrangements in time for Christmas on this half-day workshop with Randal Anderson. 14 December, 10am-1pm. £65, includes all materials. Upper Sydling House, Upper Sydling, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 9PH. Email susannecooper@icloud.com

❾ Garden-to-plate Masterclass
Learn how to create a delicious light lunch and pastry inspired by foraged herbs and flowers from the garden with chef Oakan Brousse. 14 December, 11.30am. £20. St George's Bristol, Great George Street, Bristol BS1 5RR. Tel 0845 402 4001, stgeorgesbristol.co.uk

❿ Design Masterclass
Book now for a masterclass on Planting In A Post-Wild World with landscape architect Thomas Rainer, at Regent's University London. 18 January 2020, 9.45am-4pm. £80 plus processing fee. Regent's University London, Regent's Park Campus, Inner Circle, London NW1 4NS. gilliangoodson.com



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COMPILED BY **NIKI GOSS** PHOTOGRAPHS **STEVE SAYERS**

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5"
125
4"
100
3"
75
2"
50
1"
25

Marsh Owl
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HARDING
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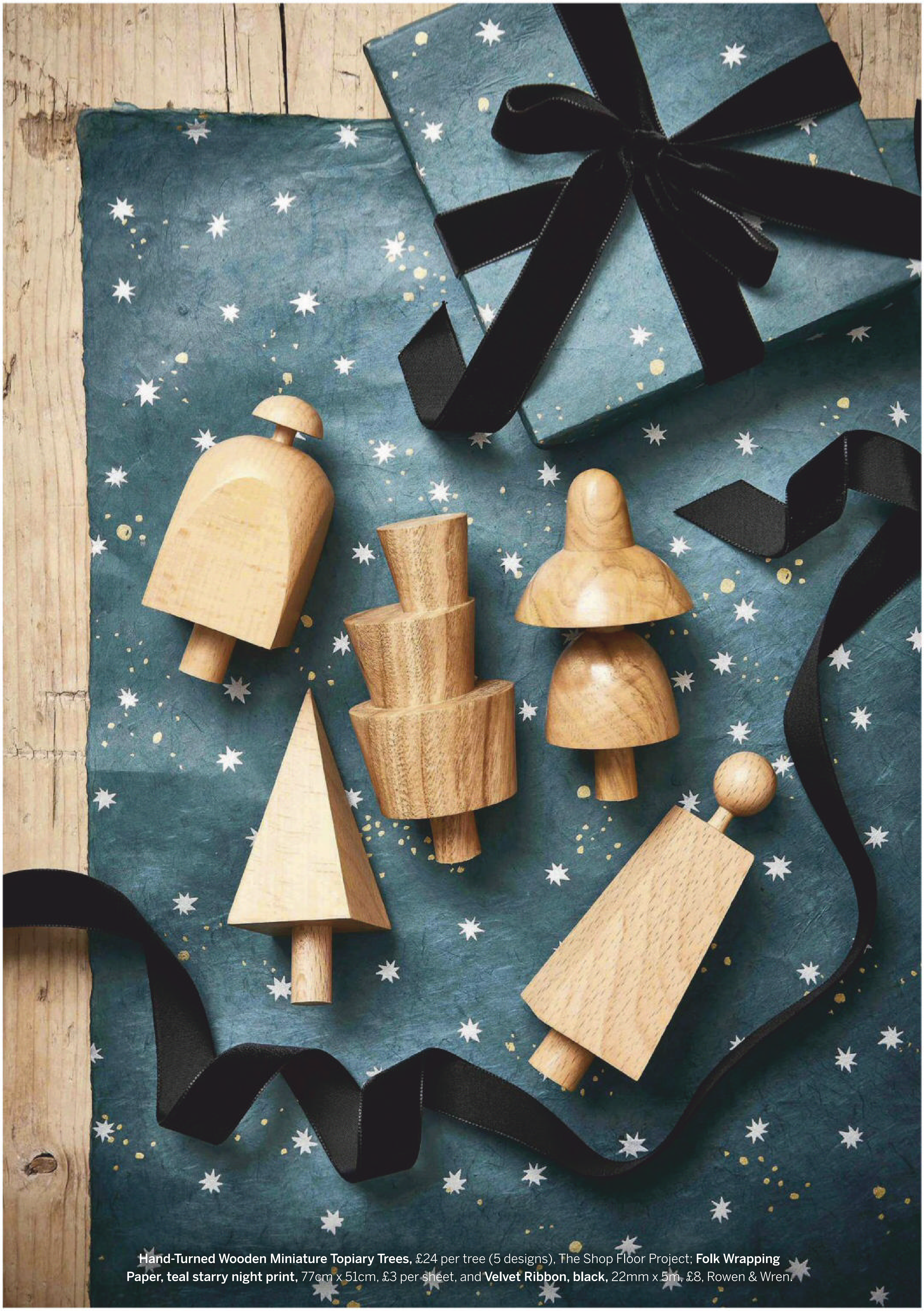
piece
jigsaw

Top row (left to right) Rattan Hanging Chair, £320, Nordic House; **Concrete Christmas Tree Decorations,** £20.99 for 3, Bells and Whistles Make at Not On The High Street; **Ikel Garden Tools, iron and mango wood,** £39.95, Nkuku. **Middle row (left to right) S-Type Secateurs, carbon steel with Japanese wisteria rattan-wrapped handles,** £149, Niwaki; **Marsh Owl Jigsaw Puzzle, 1,000 pieces,** £12.99, Angela Harding; **Studio Apron, verte,** £25, Seasalt Cornwall. **Bottom row (left to right) Sagaform Nautic Cool Bag, beige,** £26, Nordic Nest; **Merino Wool Slouch Gardening Hat,** £25, **Wrist Warmers,** £30, and **Neck Warmer,** £30 (or £75 for all three), Genus; **Victorian Grow House, rectangular,** £189.99, Crocus. **Facing page Hori Hori Tool,** £45, and **Leather Sheath,** £35, Genus; **Folk Wrapping Paper, doe-a-deer print,** 77cm x 51cm, £3 per sheet, and **Velvet Ribbon, duck egg,** 22mm x 5m, £8, Rowen & Wren.

Top row (left to right) Oak Canopy Swinging Day Bed, from £8,994 + VAT, Sitting Spiritually; **Wirework String Holder with Black String,** £15, Garden Trading; **English Fern and Blackberry Scented Candle,** £40, Floris London. **Middle row (left to right) Ladies Canvas Working Jacket, olive,** £150, Manufactum; **Large Brass Candle Sconce,** 29cm, £380, The Shop Floor Project; **FollowMe Portable Light,** £155, The Conran Shop. **Bottom row (left to right) Gold Leaf Bud Vases,** £25 each, Craft Editions; **Gardener's Messenger Bag,** £70, Petersham Nurseries; **The Half Cut Boot, bish bosh black,** £65, Poddy & Black. **Facing page Kanekoma Higonokami Blue Steel Folding Knife,** £24, Niwaki; **Folk Wrapping Paper, black-and-white block print,** 77cm x 51cm, £3 per sheet, and **Velvet Ribbon, olive gold,** 22mm x 5m, £8, Rowen & Wren.

青紙割込
登録商標
肥後守定駒



Hand-Turned Wooden Miniature Topiary Trees, £24 per tree (5 designs), The Shop Floor Project; **Folk Wrapping Paper, teal starry night print,** 77cm x 51cm, £3 per sheet, and **Velvet Ribbon, black,** 22mm x 5m, £8, Rowen & Wren.

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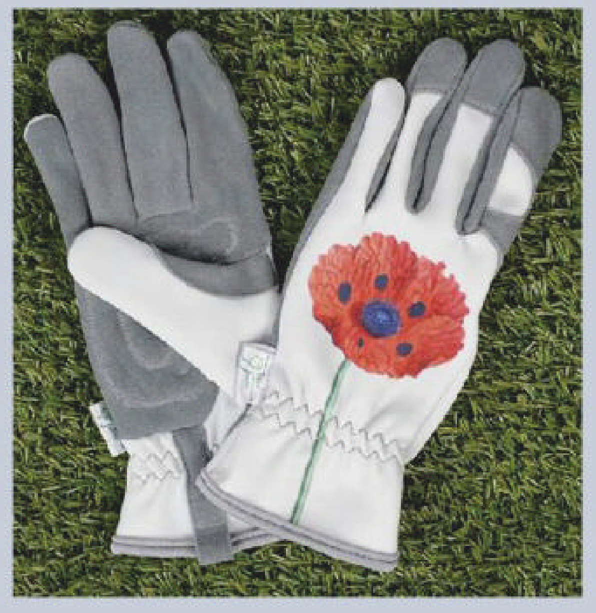
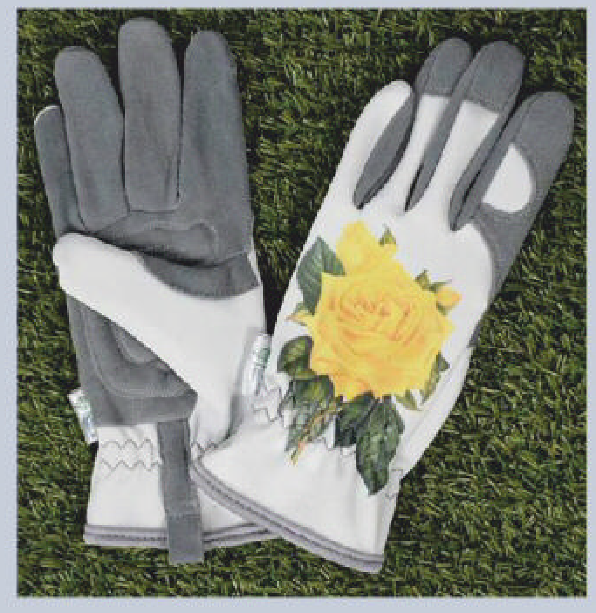


Chelsea

This stylish glove features the hand coloured printed engraving of 'The Great Scarlet Poppy' by Wedell after an original by John Lindley (1799-1865).

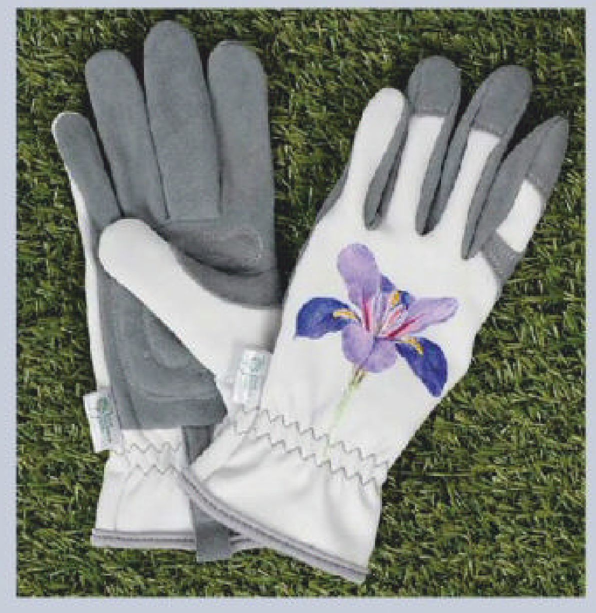
A flower widely recognised by many as a symbol of Remembrance.



Hampton

This stylish glove features the beautiful colour illustration of Rose Marechal Niel, originally by Lithographic printer, G.Severyns.

A flower widely recognised by many as a symbol of Friendship.



Malvern

This stylish glove features the beautiful watercolour illustration of Iris 'Mrs Barnard', by Lillian Snelling (1879-1972).

A flower widely recognised by many as a symbol of Hope and Wisdom.

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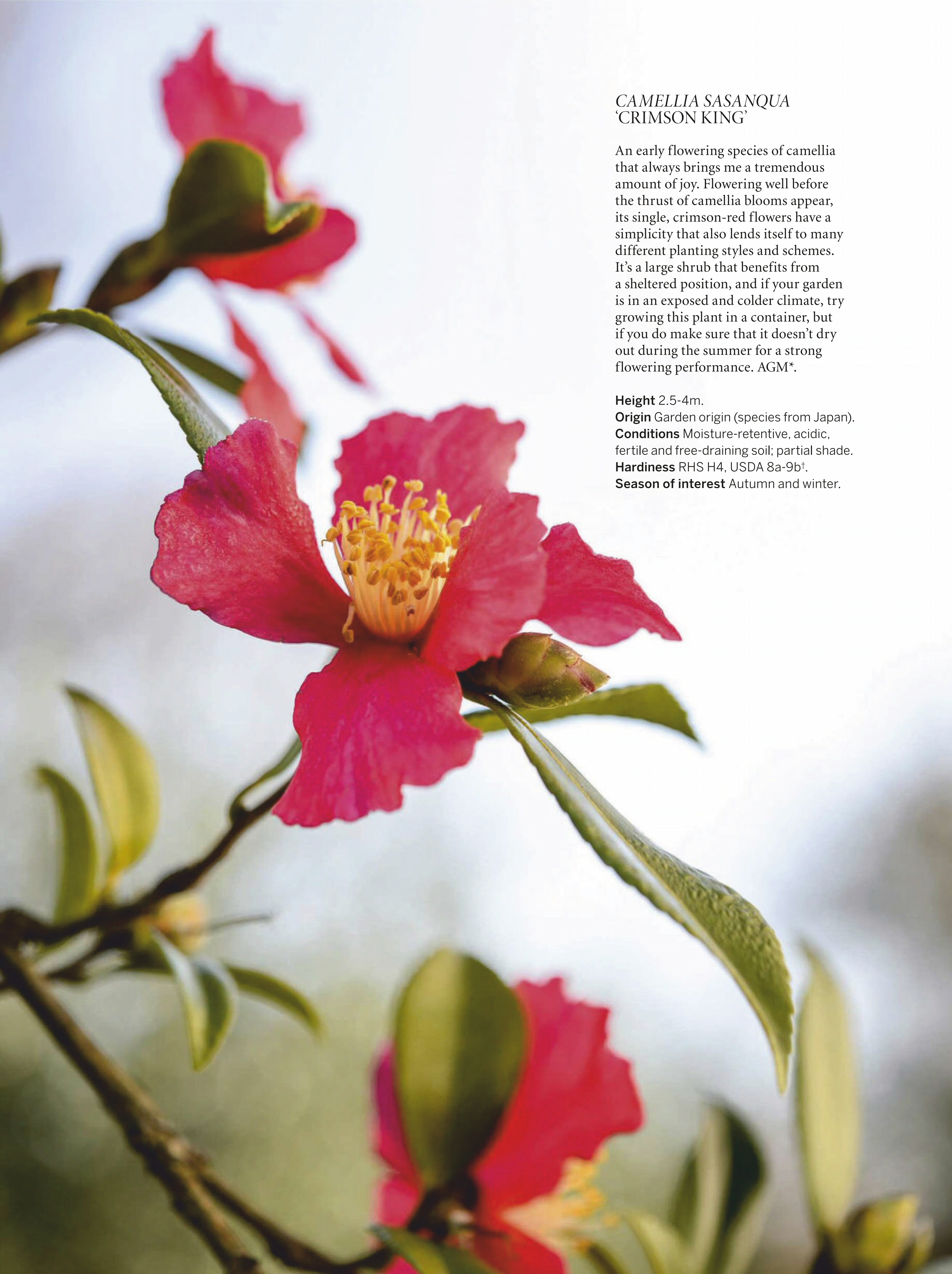


CAMELLIA SASANQUA 'CRIMSON KING'

An early flowering species of camellia that always brings me a tremendous amount of joy. Flowering well before the thrust of camellia blooms appear, its single, crimson-red flowers have a simplicity that also lends itself to many different planting styles and schemes. It's a large shrub that benefits from a sheltered position, and if your garden is in an exposed and colder climate, try growing this plant in a container, but if you do make sure that it doesn't dry out during the summer for a strong flowering performance. AGM[*].

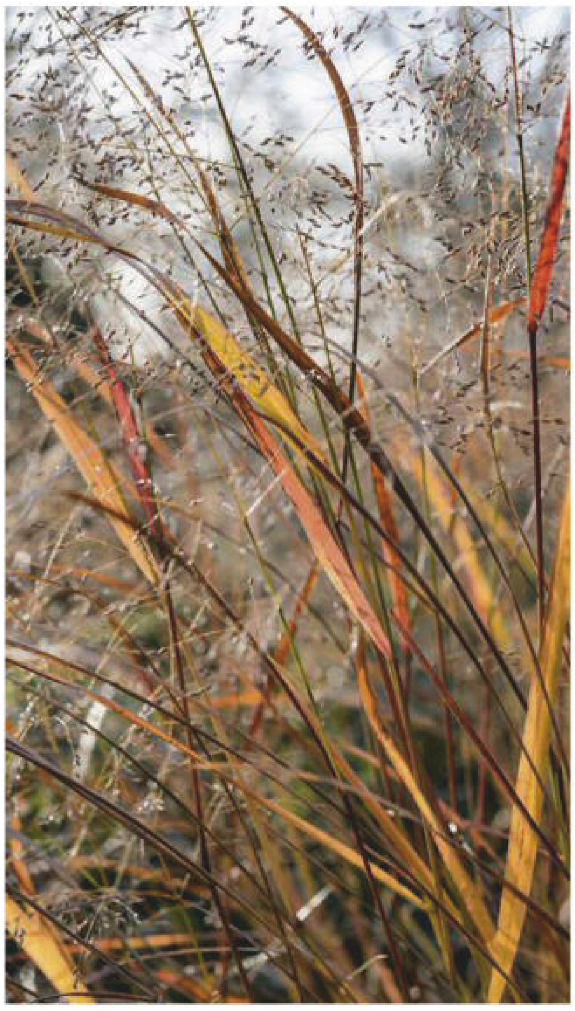
Height 2.5-4m.
Origin Garden origin (species from Japan).
Conditions Moisture-retentive, acidic, fertile and free-draining soil; partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 8a-9b[†].
Season of interest Autumn and winter.

December plants

Tom rounds off the year with a selection of plants that offer both colour and texture from a bright early flowering camellia to a pale Christmas rose and a ghostly willow

WORDS TOM BROWN PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Tom Brown
is head gardener
at West Dean Gardens
westdean.org.uk



PANICUM VIRGATUM 'KUPFERHIRSE'

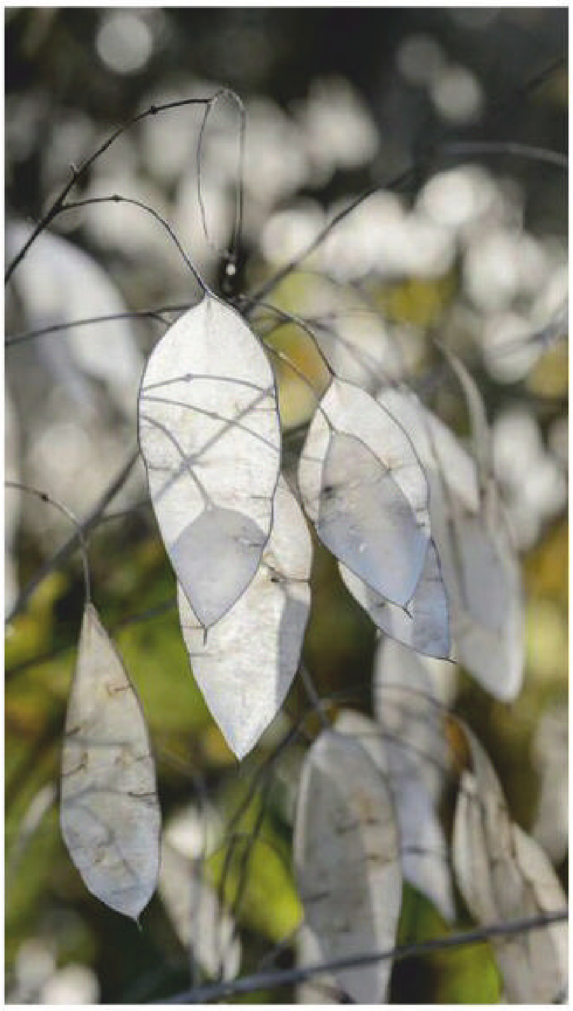
Perhaps not the first grass many look to for winter interest, preferring instead sedges with their evergreen foliage, but a well-sited and floriferous panicum takes some beating at this time of year. In summer it adds texture and delicacy to a border, but as the foliage begins to dry and becomes brittle, its tones are exquisite. I especially love it on those crisp, sunny December days when the light plays with the rippling foliage and the drops of moisture that collect on spent seedheads.

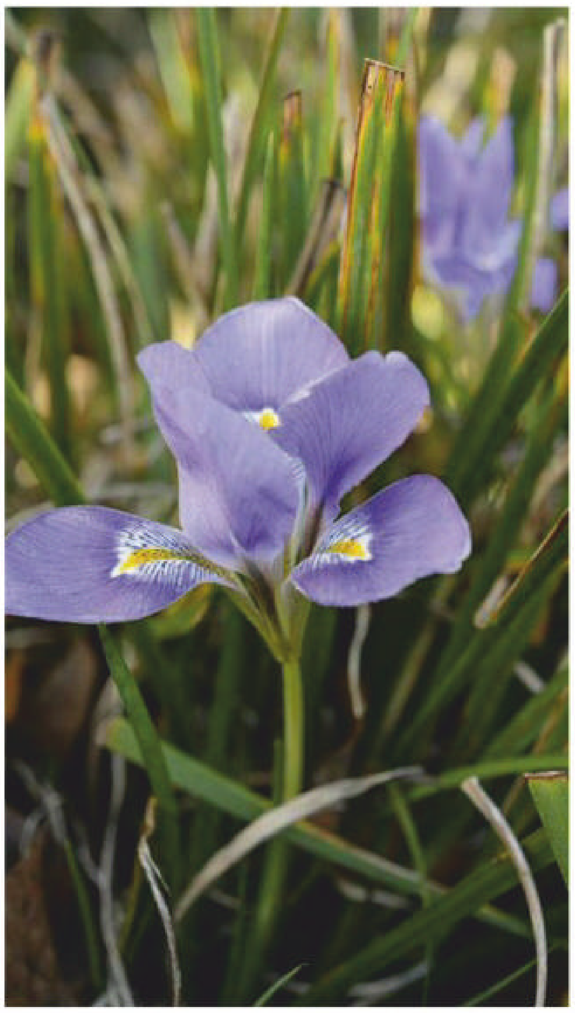
Height 90cm-1.2m.
Origin Garden origin (species from North America).
Conditions Free-draining, moisture-retentive soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest Late summer into the winter.

LUNARIA REDIVIVA

In late spring and early summer this perennial honesty has white flowers with hints of lilac above dark-green, finely toothed leaves. During December, these elliptical seedheads – which always remind me of tiny pieces of hanging tracing paper – appear, looking stunning when backlit by the winter sunshine. This is a plant that is best-placed at the rear of a border, so that once your perennials have died down you can enjoy these seedheads and find a new appreciation of honesty. AGM.

Height 60-90cm.
Origin Europe.
Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun or partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.
Season of interest Flowering in May and June with glorious seedheads in winter.





IRIS UNGUICULARIS 'MARY BARNARD'

I'm always amazed at how tolerant of incredibly poor and sun-baked positions this species of iris can be. Often, they hug walls and enjoy a roasting during the summer and then reward us in winter with large, violet flowers that have contrasting yellow signals. Flowering in December isn't without its challenges, but by planting against a sunny wall, you reduce the impact of the hard frosts, which can damage the freshly emerged flowers. If flowers are hit by the frost, many more soon appear. AGM.

Height 50cm.
Origin Garden origin (species from eastern Mediterranean and North Africa).
Conditions Free-draining soil; a sheltered position in full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest December – February.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

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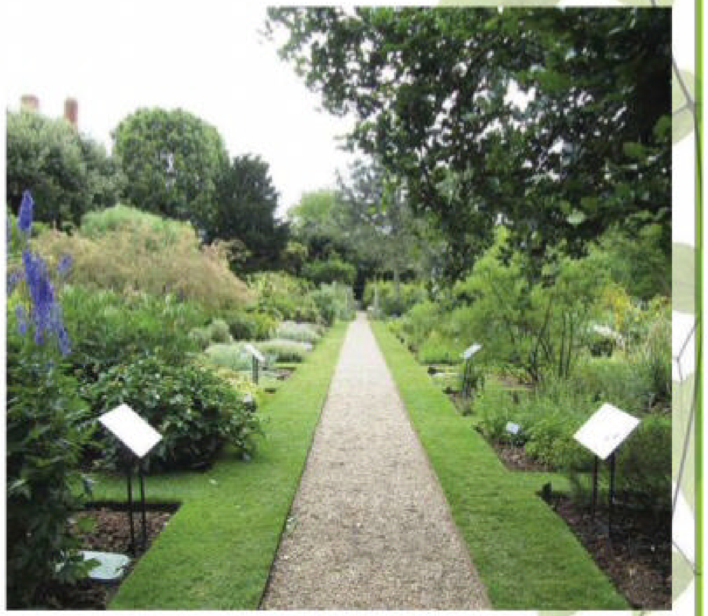

Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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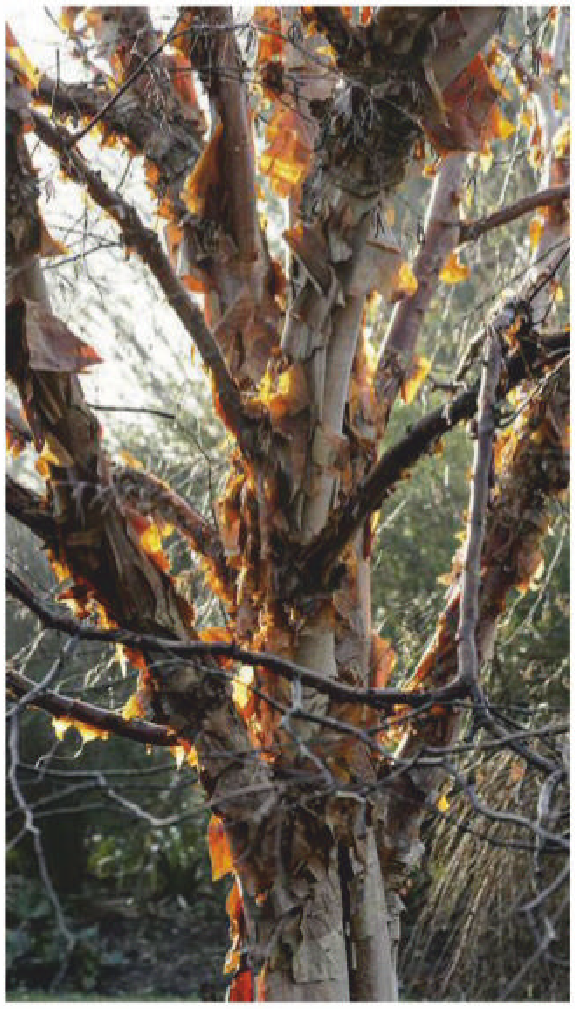


HELLEBORUS X BALLARDIAE HGC SNOW DANCE (= 'COSEH 800')

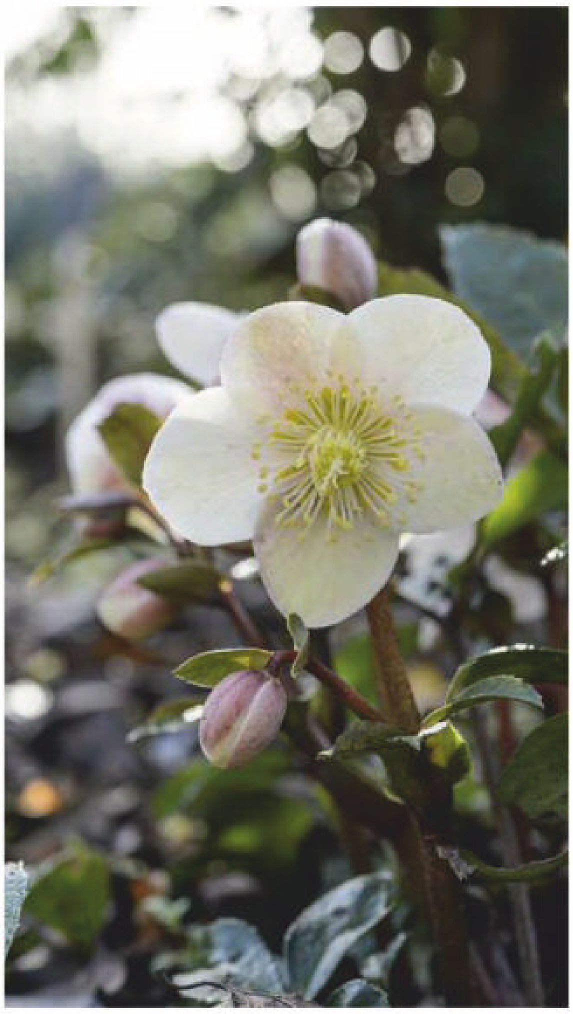
Named after the hellebore breeder Helen Ballard, this is a very exciting group of hellebores noted for their early, large and more upturned, showy flowers. They're a cross between *H. niger* and *H. lividus*, both of which are worth looking at in their own right. *H. lividus*, which can flower from December until April, is more of a challenge to grow but has exquisite, marbled foliage that makes an attractive contribution to this more robust group of hybrids.

Height 50cm.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Well-drained, fertile soil; partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.
Season of interest Flowering from December until spring.

BETULA ALBOSINENSIS 'BOWLING GREEN'

If you get a chance to visit the Winter Garden at Hillier's Arboretum in Hampshire look out for one of the most stunning specimens of this tree, which is underplanted with a carpet of *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Kokuryu'. As the bark peels away from the white trunk of this birch it takes on a cinnamon colouration that glows in the winter light. Birch work very well in all sizes of garden, their canopies aren't dense so they're not too dominant, and so offer plenty of room for varied underplanting around the base.

Height 12-15m.
Origin Garden origin (species from Western China).
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun or partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 6a-8b.
Season of interest November – March.



HAMAMELIS X INTERMEDIA 'ROBERT'

This hybrid group of witch hazels is a cross between the showier *Hamamelis japonica* (the Japanese species) and *Hamamelis mollis* (the fragrant Chinese witch hazel). 'Robert' is a scented cultivar that can come into flower as early as December. Its apricot petals have a subtlety that is even more rewarding when discovered during the winter months. Best placed near to a path so you can easily enjoy the subtle flowers and once the autumn colour has faded, you can remove some of the spent leaves to expose those precious flowers. AGM.

Height 2.5-4m.
Origin Garden hybrid.
Conditions Moist but well-drained, fertile soil; partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.
Season of interest December – February.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best both in the UK and Europe

In this month of parties and overindulgence, there's nothing quite like burning off those extra calories in a beautiful landscape. Even better if it is also home to the world's most comprehensive collection of conifers. **Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest**, has more than 12,000 specimens planted over 300 acres, and also offers cycle tracks, plenty of walking routes and running trails. With good disabled access, a playground and café, it's a great day out for the family, and a fabulous place to get some ideas and inspiration for growing conifers. Bedgebury Road, Goudhurst, Kent TN17 2SJ. Tel 01580 879820, forestryengland.uk/bedgebury

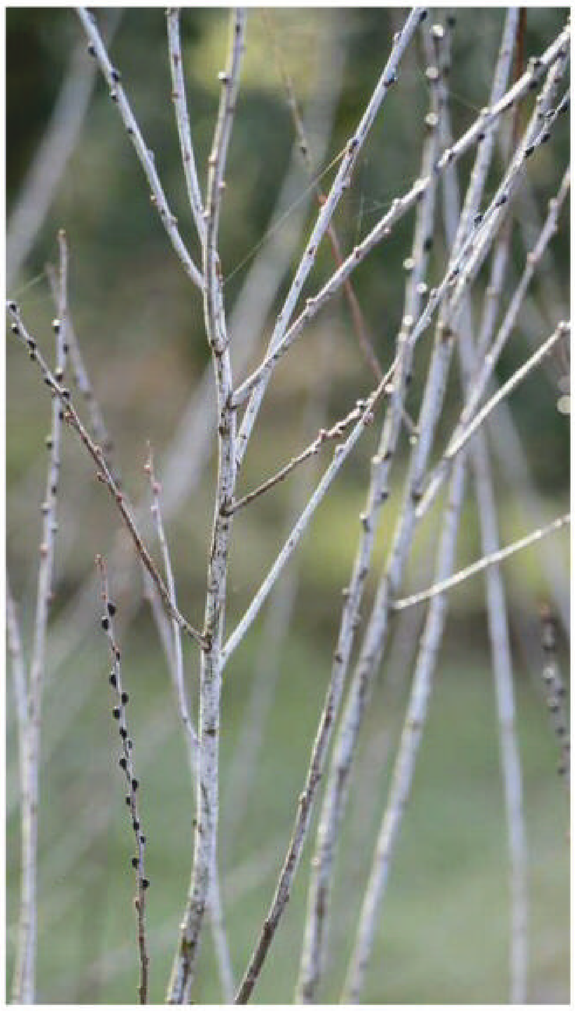
Around 30 miles south of Paris, the 16th-century **Château de Courances** has stunning parkland and gardens that epitomise the French gardening tradition. The formal gardens feature 17 ornamental ponds – all spring fed – while the park offers stunning trees and structure throughout, and on a frosty or snow-peppered day is nothing short of breathtaking. In December its large vistas, lined with hornbeams, limes, chestnuts and plane trees are magnificent. Domaine de Château de Courances, 15 Rue du Château, 91490 Courances, France. Tel +33 (0)1 64 98 07 36.

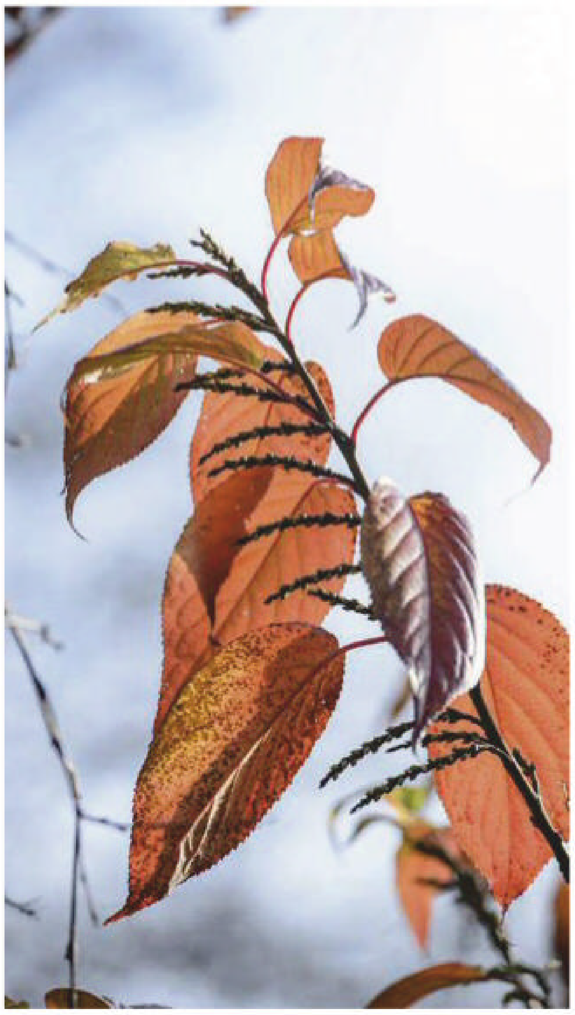
Many years ago, I was blown away by the juvenile yet imaginative, winter planting combinations at **RHS Garden Rosemoor**. The Winter Garden is now an established highlight ▷

SALIX IRRORATA

This is a fast and strong-growing willow that stands out from the fiery crowd thanks to its blue-white stem. As the season continues, wonderfully soft and tactile catkins appear on the stems before the foliage emerges in the spring. Like most shrubs grown for stem colour, a hard prune when the leaves appear will ensure the strongest colour the following winter. To get the most impact from the stems, try to site this willow in the foreground of a dark, evergreen foil, as you'll find the shrubs are illuminated with a dark background, making their impact all the more powerful. AGM.

Height 1.5-2.5m.
Origin Southwest USA.
Conditions Moisture-retentive, fertile soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest November – March.





STACHYURUS PRAECOX VAR. *MATSUZAKII* 'ISSAI'

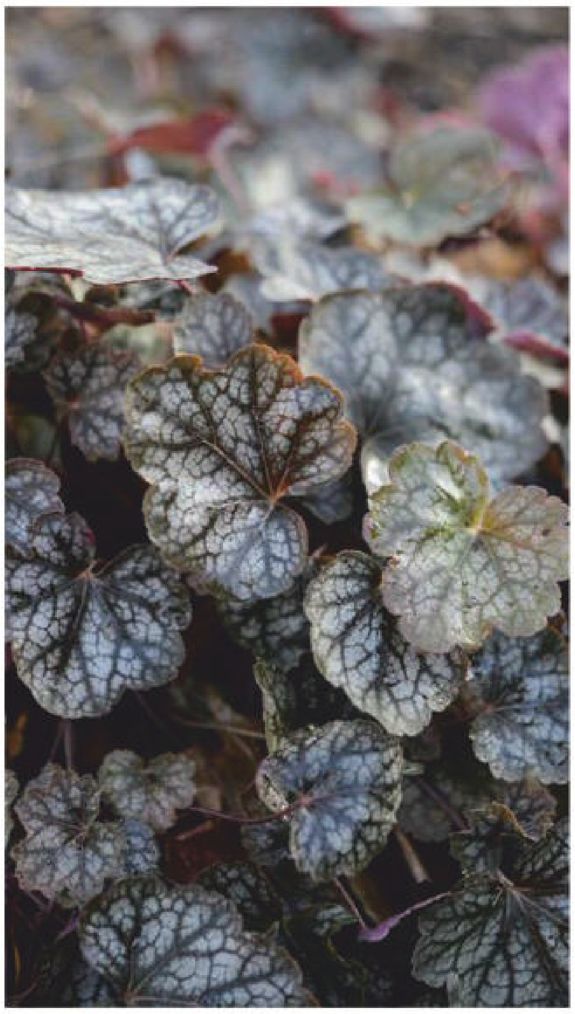
Although, this deciduous shrub is extremely striking in early spring when it flowers, I was most taken with the subtle caramel tones of this form's autumn foliage that lasted into December. It will flourish under the protection of a light tree canopy, but will also do well planted against a south- or west-facing wall. The flowering buds appear in midwinter and then swell and become more pronounced as the weeks go by, building the anticipation before they finally flourish in March and April.

Height 2.5-4m.
Origin Garden origin (species from Japan).
Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; a sheltered position.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.
Season of interest Autumn foliage and flowering in early spring.

HEUCHERA SANGUINEA 'GEISHA'S FAN'

A robust cultivar with mounds of purple-and-grey marbled foliage, persisting well into the winter. Best for the front of a border or path edge, they also work well underplanted with bulbs such as snowdrops and species narcissi. Heucheras also make superb subjects for groundcover, especially alongside hellebores and cyclamen. If grown in containers, keep them on the dry side in the winter to deter vine weevils, which can find them irresistible.

Height 50cm.
Origin Garden origin (species from western USA).
Conditions Fertile, free-draining soil; partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.
Season of interest Flowering from May with foliage interest throughout the year.



MANY THANKS TO PARHAM HOUSE & GARDENS (PARHAMINSUSSEX.CO.UK) IN WEST SUSSEX AND RHS GARDEN WISLEY WHERE THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN.

▷ with a wonderful balance of mature specimens and groundcovering associations – using conifers, evergreens and perennials. The plant drifts are substantial, delivering a seasonal spectacle using many winter favourites, including witch hazels, viburnums, daphnes and willows. RHS Garden Rosemoor, Great Torrington, Devon EX38 8PH. Tel 01805 624067, rhs.org.uk

Another winter garden I'd recommend is the **Cambridge Botanical Garden**. It's one of the country's premier winter displays and this year celebrates its 40th anniversary. During the darkest months, our appreciation of colour is heightened and visiting gardens full of coloured stems, scented flowers and brightly variegated evergreens is a treat. 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE. Tel 01223 336265, botanic.cam.ac.uk

In December, trees take centre stage in many gardens, and one of the best trees for large and small gardens alike is birch. The best place to see birches is **Stone Lane Gardens** in Devon. This five-acre woodland and water garden on the outskirts of Dartmoor houses the National Collection of wild origin birches. Kenneth and June Ashburner began the collection more than 40 years ago and now run the garden as a charity, under the stewardship of garden manager and arboriculturist, Paul Bartlett. The birches are planted in accordance to their native provenance, a group of Chinese red birches being particularly spectacular and worth looking out for, along with a large planting of the whitest of birches: *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*. Stone Lane Gardens Stone Farm, Chagford, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ13 8JU. Tel 01647 231311, stonelanegardens.com

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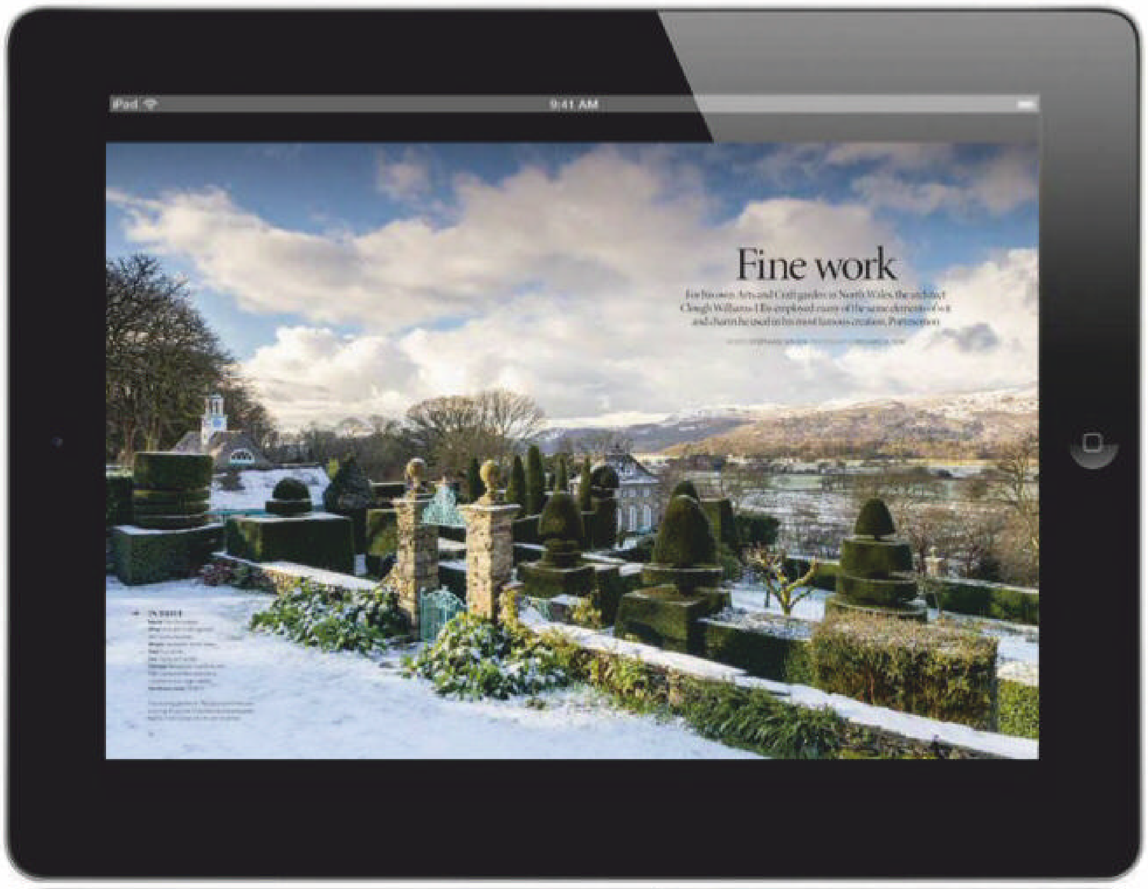
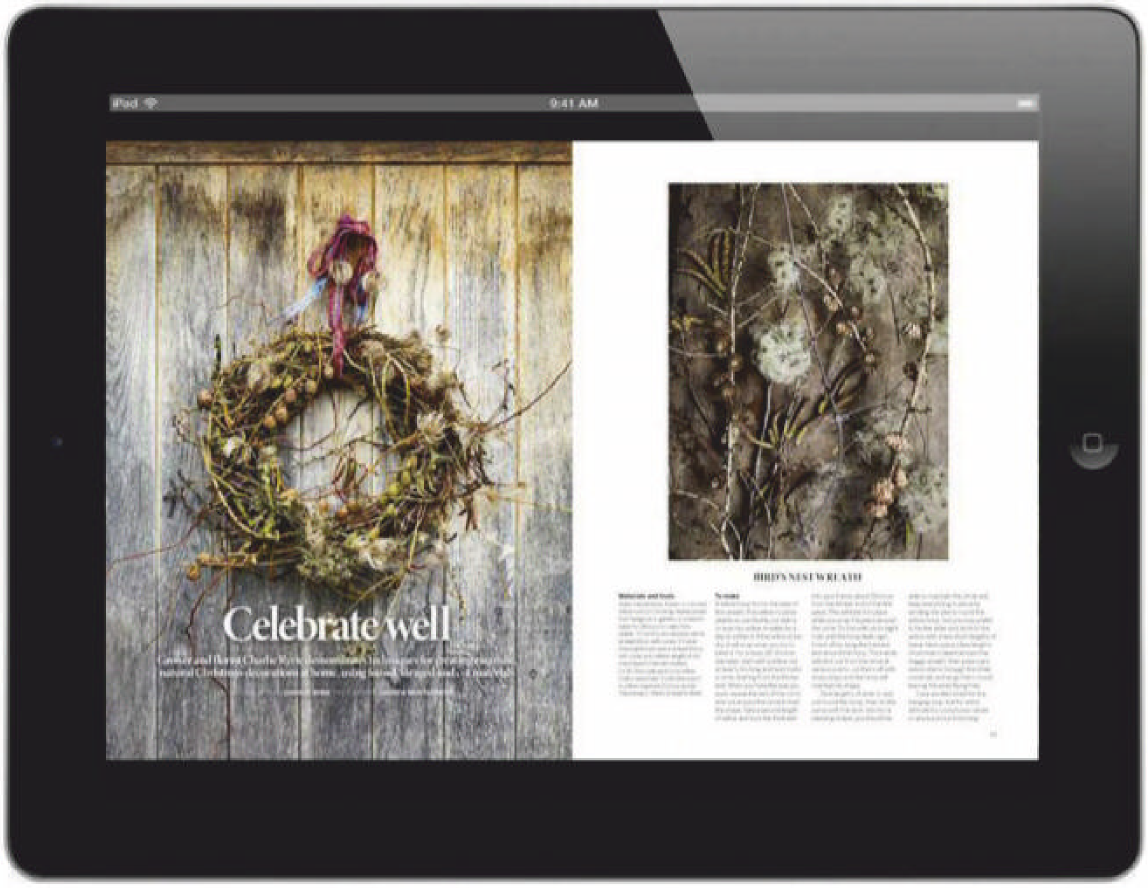


December plants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TRAVEL

The Outsider

Horticulturist Hannah Gardner explores the southern Thai island of Koh Yao Noi, where she finds lush foliage, giant trees and takes inspiration from an exotic-looking ginger lily

WORDS **HANNAH GARDNER** ILLUSTRATION **ALICE PATTULLO**

Southern Thailand has landscapes of paradisiacal beauty. Towering iconic limestone stacks and small islands scattered like rough emeralds cast into the Andamen Sea. The sheer abundance, variety and scale of the vegetation is breathtaking. There are about 2,250 tree species here, one of the richest tree floras in the world, containing 75 per cent of all native trees found in Thailand. The southern peninsula includes the transition zone between the Indo-Burma and Sundaland floristic regions, two of the six most diverse and threatened biodiversity hotspots in the world.

Inspiration for the trip

Koh Yao Noi, an island in Thailand's World Heritage-listed Phang Nga Bay and famous for its extensive mangrove forests, was one of the areas affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster of December 2004. The damage included the destruction of around 118 acres of mangrove forest fringing the island. The local community, which depends heavily on eco-tourism and fishing, has been working diligently on mangrove restoration.

When to go

The region has a humid, tropical and subtropical monsoon climate with a cooler dry season from November to late March.

Where to go

Even in popular destinations, such as Phang Nga Bay, it is possible to experience solitude if you know where to go. Koh Yao Noi, a tranquil Muslim island of great serenity makes a wonderful base. The pristine natural forests that clothe most of the island are full of interesting species, many of them with medicinal or edible properties. Cycling along the island's one asphalt road and many tracks you pass through stretches of dense jungle. Among the jostling rattan palms, ferns and colourful gingers, it is the immense veined saggitate leaves of the aroids (*Colocasia* and *Alocasia*) that command attention. The handsome pristine leaves of banana come a close second, noticeably unshredded in the moist, sheltered forest understorey. Swaying coconut palms (*Cocos nucifera*), a tethered cockerel and a modest stand of slender, rubber trees (*Hevea brasiliensis*), with black tapping cups hanging from their trunks, signal a farmstead. Herds of steaming water buffalo linger in the cooling mud of the drained paddy fields that lie between the verdant mountains and the mangroves of the glittering coast.

Be sure to head, in a traditional long-tail boat, to the remote north of the island to pay homage to the celebrated Big Tree, home of the female spirit Nang Da Kian. The girth of this towering *Hopea beccariana* (in the Dipterocarpaceae family) is a staggering 24.2m; it is 64.2m high.

There are many massive trees here with wondrous, sinuous, buttress roots, an adaption to the shallow soils and ambitious reach of these species. Growing up to 75m it is a struggle to see the pendulous leaves and yellow flowers of *Shorea laevis* (another dipterocarp), unless they drop to the forest floor, nor evergreen *Neesia altissima,* each leaf an impressive 25-30cm long. *Anisoptera costata* is also found here, an endangered species in the Dipterocarpaceae family, its Latin name descriptive of the prominent venation of the leaf blade. Wild orchids and ferns exist both as terrestrial plants and as epiphytes ornamenting the trees.

Across the bay from Big Tree is Koh Roi. At low tide, walk through a low natural gap in the rocks into a sanctuary-like inner mangrove forest, home to thousands of restless bats and enclosed on all sides by high protective cliffs. Gravity-defying trees and shrubs cling to all but the most exposed rock faces, voracious climbing species rampaging through their branches. In the tropics mangrove ecosystems occur along the muddy tidal shores of sheltered coastlines and river estuaries. They are an arresting site, the full glory of an extensive arachnoid root system mostly visible above ground. Mangrove species, such as the fish-killer tree (*Barringtonia asiatica*) have structural adaptations allowing them to thrive in these challenging anaerobic conditions. They develop aerial roots (pneumatophores) for 'breathing' and their seeds tend to germinate while attached to the parent plant (vivipary).

Plants to grow at home

If you have a sheltered location it is exciting and achievable to recapture a sense of the soothing, lush jungle back home in temperate climes. Top of my hardy exotic list is the yellow ginger lily *Hedychium gardnerianum*. Discovered in Nepal in the early 19th century by a Mr Gardner, but also native to Thailand, this handsome and erect rhizomatous perennial can reach almost 2m. Stiff stems anchor large, glaucous, fleshy leaves that have an architectural lanceolate-elliptic form. It is a vigorous grower so a few rhizomes planted quite shallowly in spring will soon achieve an impressive clump. In early autumn showy lemon-yellow flowers with prominent scarlet stamens, form a terminal bottlebrush inflorescence. Each exudes a transporting heady sweet fragrance, conjuring the atmosphere of tropical forests and especially potent on the evening air.

Given the right conditions this ginger lily is winter hardy and easy to source and grow. It requires moist, but well-drained, humus-rich soil and a site in full sun or partial shade. Primarily, it requires shelter from cold wind. Cut back to the base after flowering and cover with a deep mulch (leaf mould or garden compost is ideal) to see it through the winter. Good planting partners include punchy foliage plants, such as *Fatsia japonica*, *Miscanthus* species and the hardy Japanese banana (*Musa basjoo*), as well as jewel-coloured dahlias, salvias and cannas. In partial shade pair with statuesque ferns, such as *Dryopteris filix-mas*. Tropical plants do not appreciate drought so ensure you water well, especially during the first year. □

Where to stay

The Simple

86/21 Moo 1, Koh Yao Noi, Ko Yao,
Phang Na, 82160, Thailand.
thesimplekohyaonoi.com

Boutique hotel with loads of contemporary style located in a charming laid-back village.

Tha Khao Bay View

4/8 Moo 4, Koh Yao Noi, Phang Nga,
82160, Thailand.
booking.com or kohyaotravel.com

Hotel that clings to the mountainside with excellent views of Tha Khao Bay.

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GARDENING TALENT

Wes Shaw

As head of horticulture at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, Wes works closely with its curators to make connections between objects in the museum and what visitors see in the garden

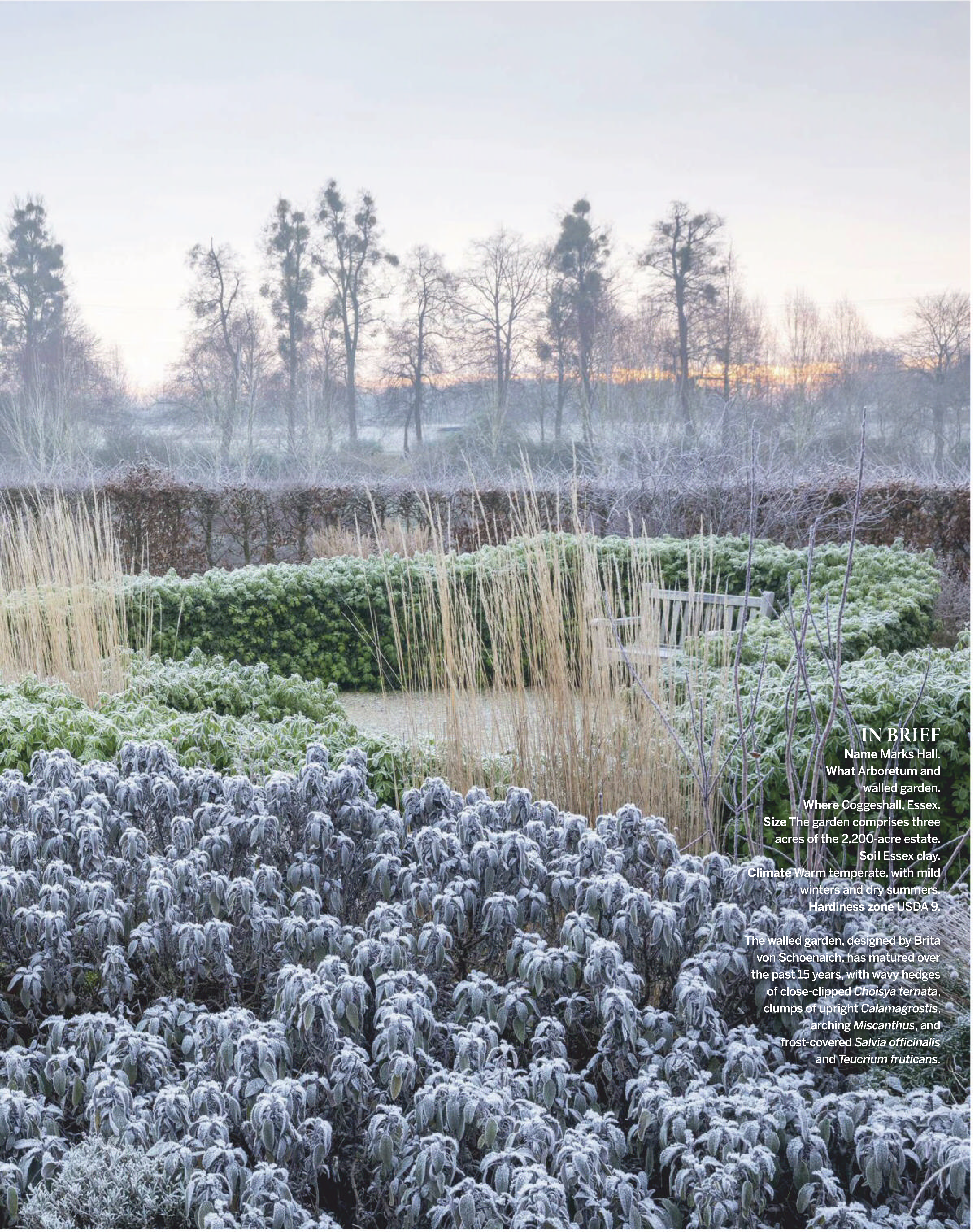
PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest gardening memory As a child, getting dragged along to garden centres every weekend by my mum and hating it. Now I love it.
Who has inspired your career? It would be my mum. After I got my HNC she was the one who persuaded me to apply for a job at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. I started as a botanical horticulturist and went on to become keeper of the Palm House.
Favourite garden The last place that really blew me away was Gardens by the Bay in Singapore. Amazing conservatories, landscaping and planting taking horticulture to a new level. While I was there I saw gardeners abseiling down the side of green walls and volunteers using tweezers to pick over the beds.
Most valuable training I did a stint years ago working for a landscaper who was a bit of a cowboy, but I found it really useful in seeing the results of taking shortcuts and how NOT to do things.
Favourite planting style The New Perennial Movement, although not so new anymore; I love the combination of perennials and grasses to create naturalistic plantings that connect to nature. I recently worked with James Hitchmough to create the Grasslands Garden here at the Horniman, designed to complement the opening of the Museum's new Anthropology Gallery in 2018. We look at indigenous peoples' relationship to their landscape and help visitors learn more about the endangered grassland habitats.
Biggest challenge facing gardeners today The biggest challenge for gardeners or managers of public parks and gardens is the cuts in funding. Green spaces are so important to society, and keeping them looking good and fit for purpose is hard without proper funding.
Something every gardener can do to be more sustainable in their gardening Plant more trees; choose plants that are more drought tolerant and everyone should be composting.
What principles have guided your attitude to gardening? Gardens should constantly change and evolve, I never see the point of keeping something looking the same as it did at some point in the past.
What's the next big project task you'll be tackling in the garden? We are planning a Winter Garden for an area of the Horniman Gardens that needs a bit of a refresh.
Contact Horniman Museum and Gardens, Forest Hill, London SE23 3PQ. horniman.ac.uk. **Instagram** @hornimanmuseumgardens
Email wes.shaw@hotmail.com

Making a mark

At the heart of a striking heritage landscape in Essex lies an enviable collection of trees thrown into sharp relief by a contemporary, lakeside garden

WORDS **JODIE JONES** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**



IN BRIEF

Name Marks Hall.
What Arboretum and walled garden.
Where Coggeshall, Essex.
Size The garden comprises three acres of the 2,200-acre estate.
Soil Essex clay.
Climate Warm temperate, with mild winters and dry summers.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

The walled garden, designed by Brita von Schoenaich, has matured over the past 15 years, with wavy hedges of close-clipped *Choisya ternata*, clumps of upright *Calamagrostis*, arching *Miscanthus*, and frost-covered *Salvia officinalis* and *Teucrium fruticans*.

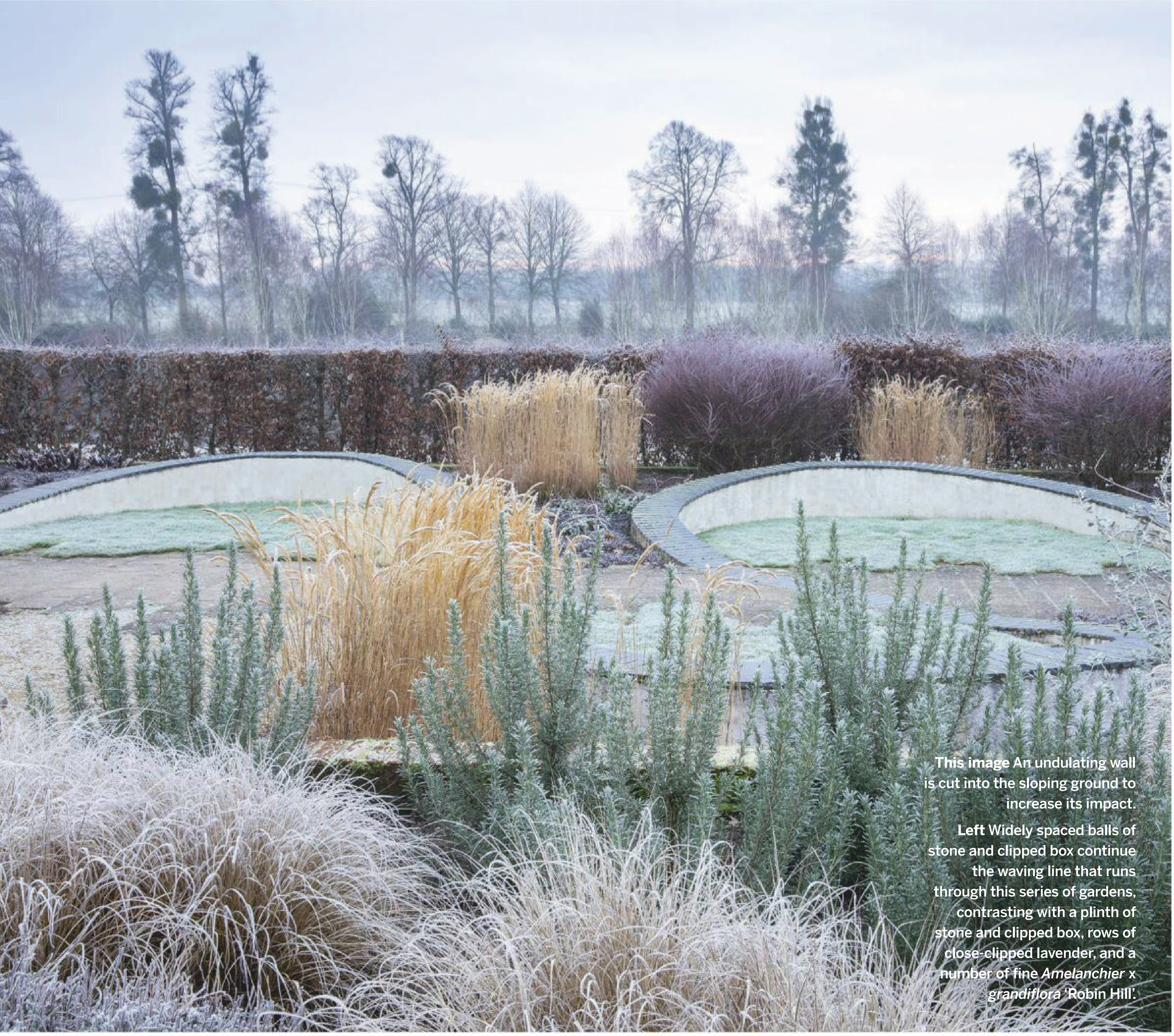
Five, interlinked gardens are connected by land-form shapes and sinuous hedges and walls

The Essex estate of Marks Hall has been shaped by remarkably few families since the name of Mercheshalle was registered in the Domesday book nearly one thousand years ago. The Merkshalls moved in shortly after the Norman Conquest and stayed until 1562 and the Honywoods were in charge from 1605 until 1897. The estate was then acquired by a former Liberal MP Thomas Phillips Price after an inheritance dispute triggered an auction.

Phillips Price was enthralled by the fine collection of rare and venerable trees on his land. Keen to preserve this rich botanical heritage, he determined to bequeath Marks Hall to the nation, and would surely be delighted to see that today the estate is enjoyed by thousands of visitors who come to explore its magnificent arboretum, contemporary walled garden and miles of woodland walks.

But the picture hasn't always been so rosy. Phillips Price died in 1932, leaving his wife a lifetime interest in the property, but she survived him by over 30 years, during which time the estate fell into disrepair. Much of the land was leased to the Forestry Commission, which covered it in commercial pine plantations, and when a charitable trust was finally established to run the estate in 1971 it was a relic of its former self.

The trustees' first act was to buy back the lease from the Forestry Commission and draft a plan to create an arboretum of botanical significance. Then it was just a question of waiting for the pines to mature. As each plantation was felled, the land was cleared and brought back into the management of the Marks Hall Trust.



This image An undulating wall is cut into the sloping ground to increase its impact.

Left Widely spaced balls of stone and clipped box continue the waving line that runs through this series of gardens, contrasting with a plinth of stone and clipped box, rows of close-clipped lavender, and a number of fine *Amelanchier* x *grandiflora* 'Robin Hill'.

Ian Chandler, who is now the arboretum manager, came to Marks Hall in 1998, just as the pace of change was starting to accelerate. The arboretum had been organised into geographic zones, with a programme of planting on a generous scale that today forms an impressive display. Visitors first walk through a grove of willows into an area representing Europe, which is designed to blend with the surrounding countryside. From there a broad gravel path leads into Asia, North America and the southern hemisphere.

Marks Hall has many trees of international importance. These include a *Parrotia persica* grown from wild-collected seed, and therefore genetically valuable, which Ian has managed to propagate on the estate, and an *Abies numidica* that is on a critically endangered list in southeast Algeria where it grows in the wild. He also intends to try *Meliosma veitchiorum* – grown from a root cutting from renowned plant hunter EH Wilson's original wild collection in western China at the end of the 19th century – although seed from its long purple pods can take up to two years to germinate. "One thing we are not short of is space," says Ian. Ten more acres of former forestry land are currently being cleared by a team of volunteers and Ian is dreaming of a new ginkgo forest. "We are always planning for the future."

In 1998, Brita von Schoenaich was commissioned to create a contemporary design for a three-acre, lakeside garden to complement and contrast with the wider estate. Her design of five interlinked gardens, connected by land-form shapes and sinuous hedges and walls, caused quite a stir when it was unveiled in 2003. Planted with bold

To continue turn to page 42 ▷

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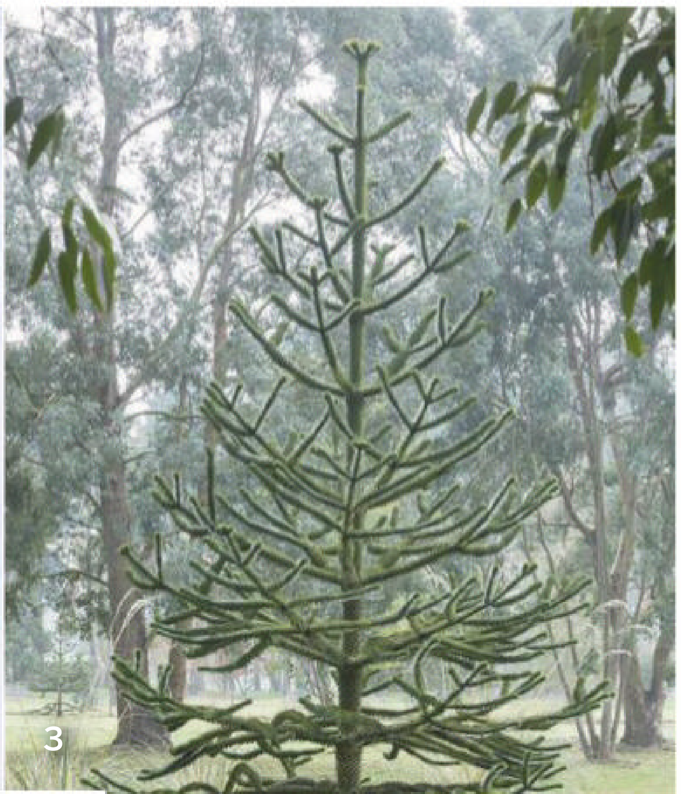
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8 KEY WINTER PLANTS

1 *Hamamelis mollis* The Chinese witch hazel, is a large, broadly trouble-free shrub bearing fragrant, spidery blooms on its bare branches in late winter. 2.5-4m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b†.

2 *Corylus avellana* Our native hazel or cobnut, is covered in catkins from mid-February. It is wind-pollinated and releases clouds of yellow pollen when its branches are shaken. 4-6m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

3 *Araucaria araucana* The monkey puzzle tree is a South American native that first appeared in this country in the Victorian era. Makes a fine ornamental specimen, given the space to reach its full height. 15-30m. RHS H7, USDA 7a-10b.

4 *Cortaderia selloana* The standard pampas grass, is a vigorous, clump-forming perennial grass that needs plenty of space, since it can reach 3m high and 2m across. RHS H6, USDA 8a-10b.

5 *Lonicera fragrantissima* Winter-flowering honeysuckle, is a fine shrub that bears fragrant flowers on almost leafless branches to the delight of winter-active bumblebees. 2m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

6 *Daphne bholua* 'Jacqueline Postill' Sometimes known as the Nepalese paper plant, this daphne has leathery, deep-green leaves and from late winter to spring produces masses of deliciously perfumed pink and white flowers. 4m. AGM*. RHS H4.

7 *Chimonanthus praecox* Wintersweet is a fast-growing shrub with bare branches covered in fragrant yellow flowers throughout winter. 2.5m (4m if trained against a wall). RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b.

8 *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica' A medium-sized dogwood that produces a thicket of vivid red winter stems if coppiced to within 5cm of the ground in spring. 2m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.

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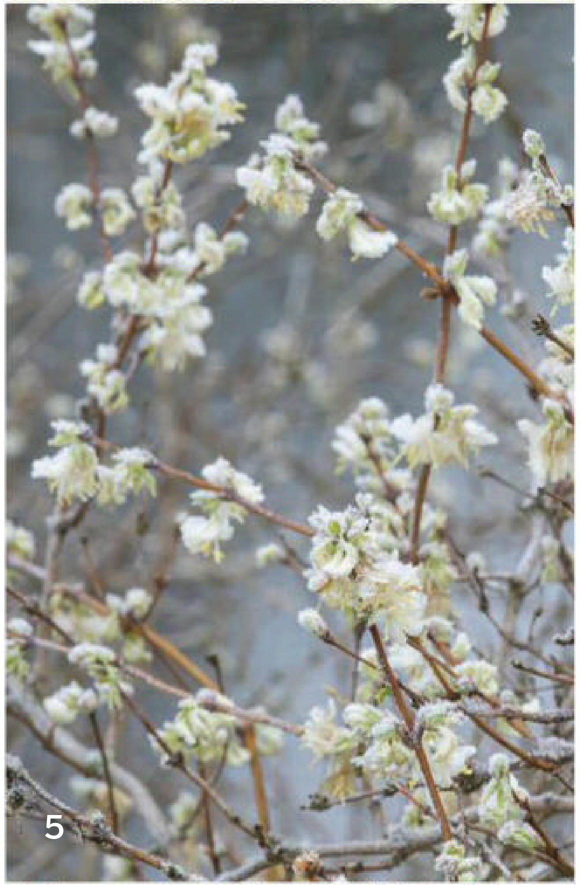
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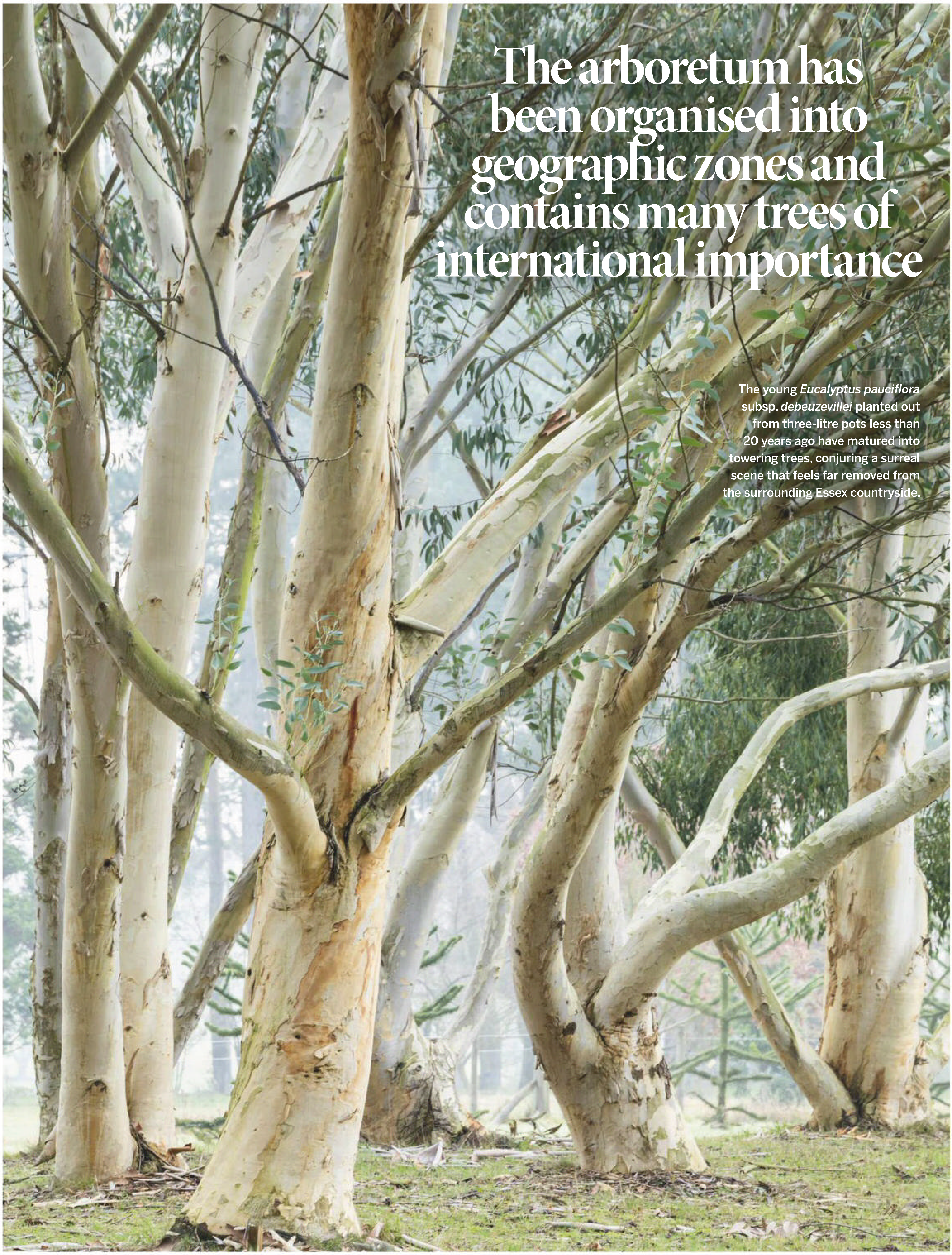
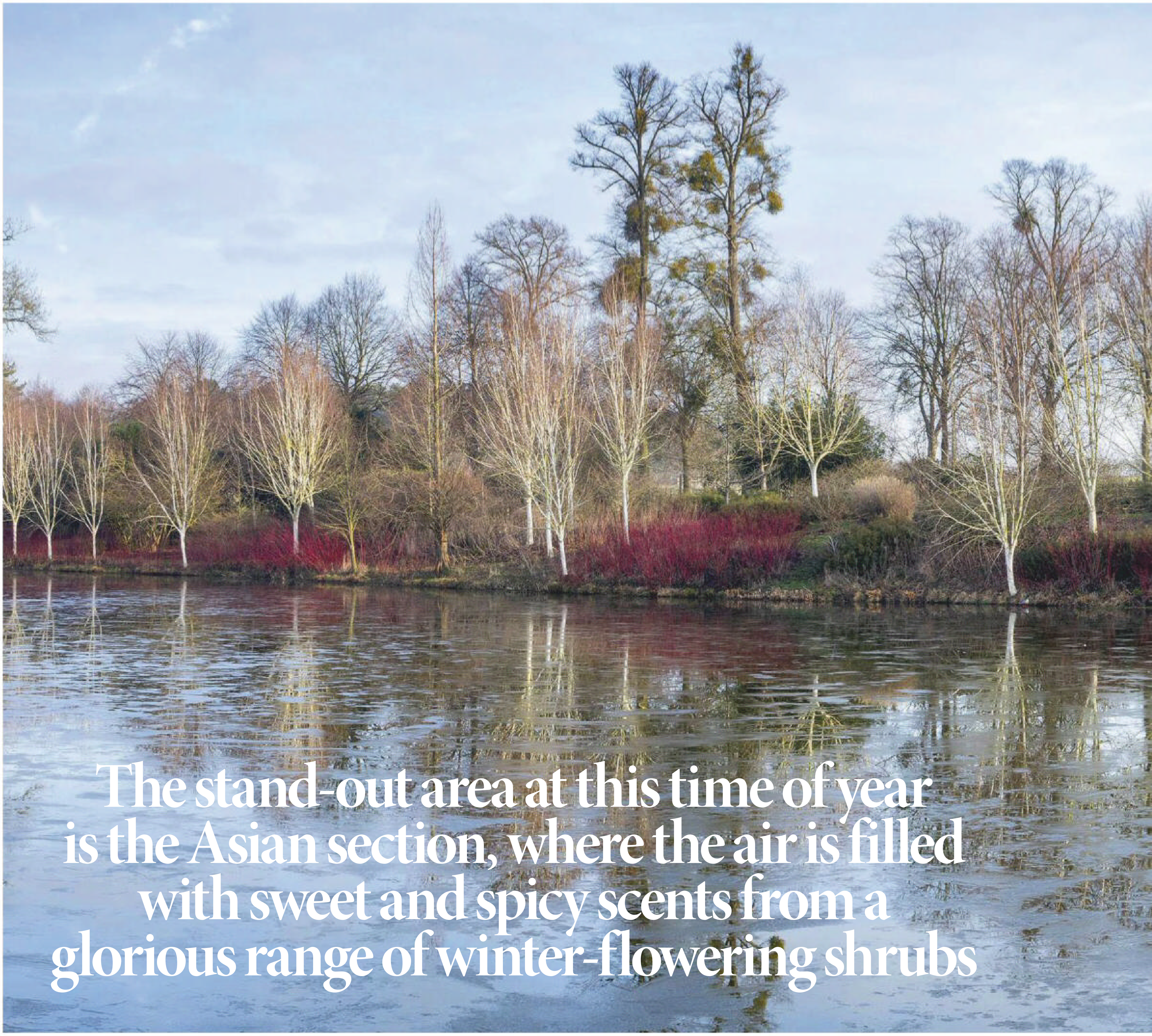
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.



The arboretum has been organised into geographic zones and contains many trees of international importance

The young *Eucalyptus pauciflora* subsp. *debeuzevillei* planted out from three-litre pots less than 20 years ago have matured into towering trees, conjuring a surreal scene that feels far removed from the surrounding Essex countryside.



The stand-out area at this time of year is the Asian section, where the air is filled with sweet and spicy scents from a glorious range of winter-flowering shrubs

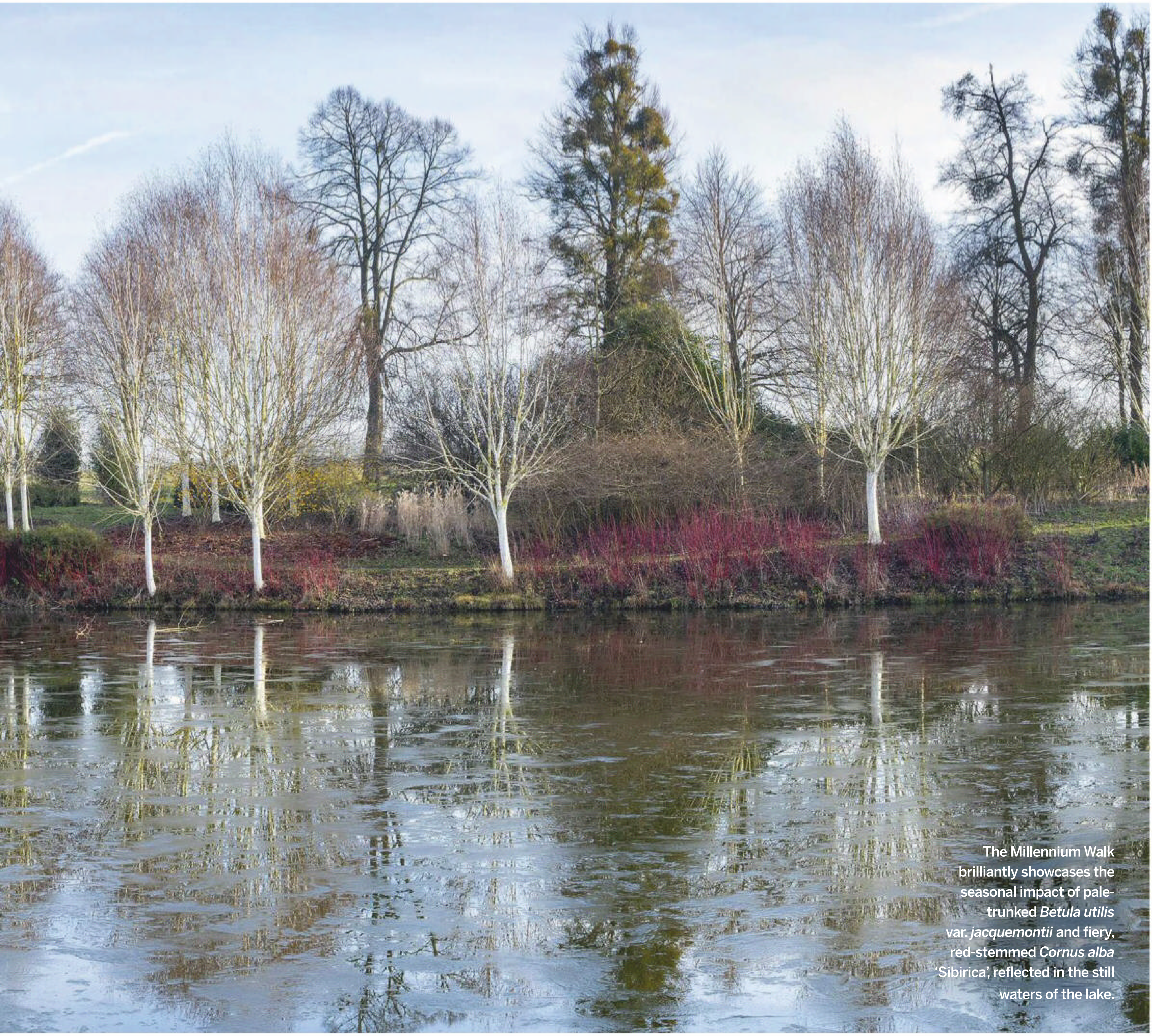
▷ blocks of ornamental grasses, long-flowering perennials and a symbolic ‘pool’ lined with slivers of slate set end on end, it soon became one of the best-loved parts of the estate. In fact, it is now known as the Honeypot for its capacity to lure visitors in, although at this time of year its gates are firmly shut for the winter.

Right now, the stand-out feature is two acres of former scrub designed to peak during the quieter months of winter. It lies within the Asian section and, 19 years after planting, its semi-mature stands of *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* and *Cornus alba* ‘Sibirica’ create a magnificent effect on a frosty morning, when the white trunks and blazing red stems are reflected in the still waters of the bordering lake. The air here is filled with sweet and spicy scents from a glorious range of winter-flowering shrubs, most notably witch hazels, wintersweet and *Sarcococca hookeriana*. It is an expression of Marks Hall’s aims – to celebrate trees, to promote excellence in horticulture, and to offer a magical space that can be enjoyed at any time of year. ❑

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Marks Hall Estate, Coggeshall, Essex CO6 1TG. **Tel** 01376 563796. **Website** markshall.org.uk

Open Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 10am-4pm, until 31 March 2020. Check website for opening times over the Christmas period and for summer opening times.



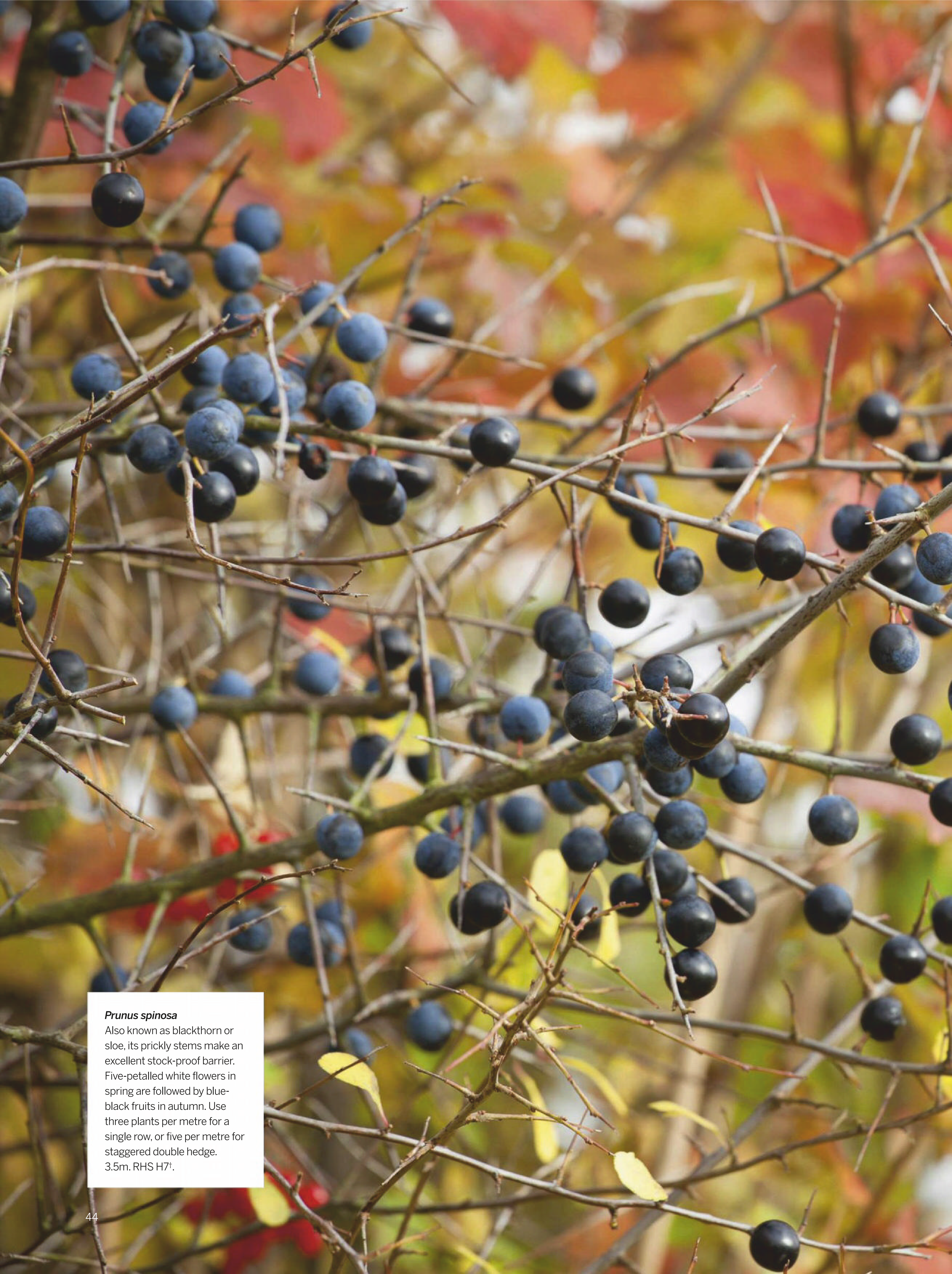
The Millennium Walk brilliantly showcases the seasonal impact of pale-trunked *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* and fiery, red-stemmed *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica', reflected in the still waters of the lake.

CREATING A GEOGRAPHY OF TIME AND PLACE

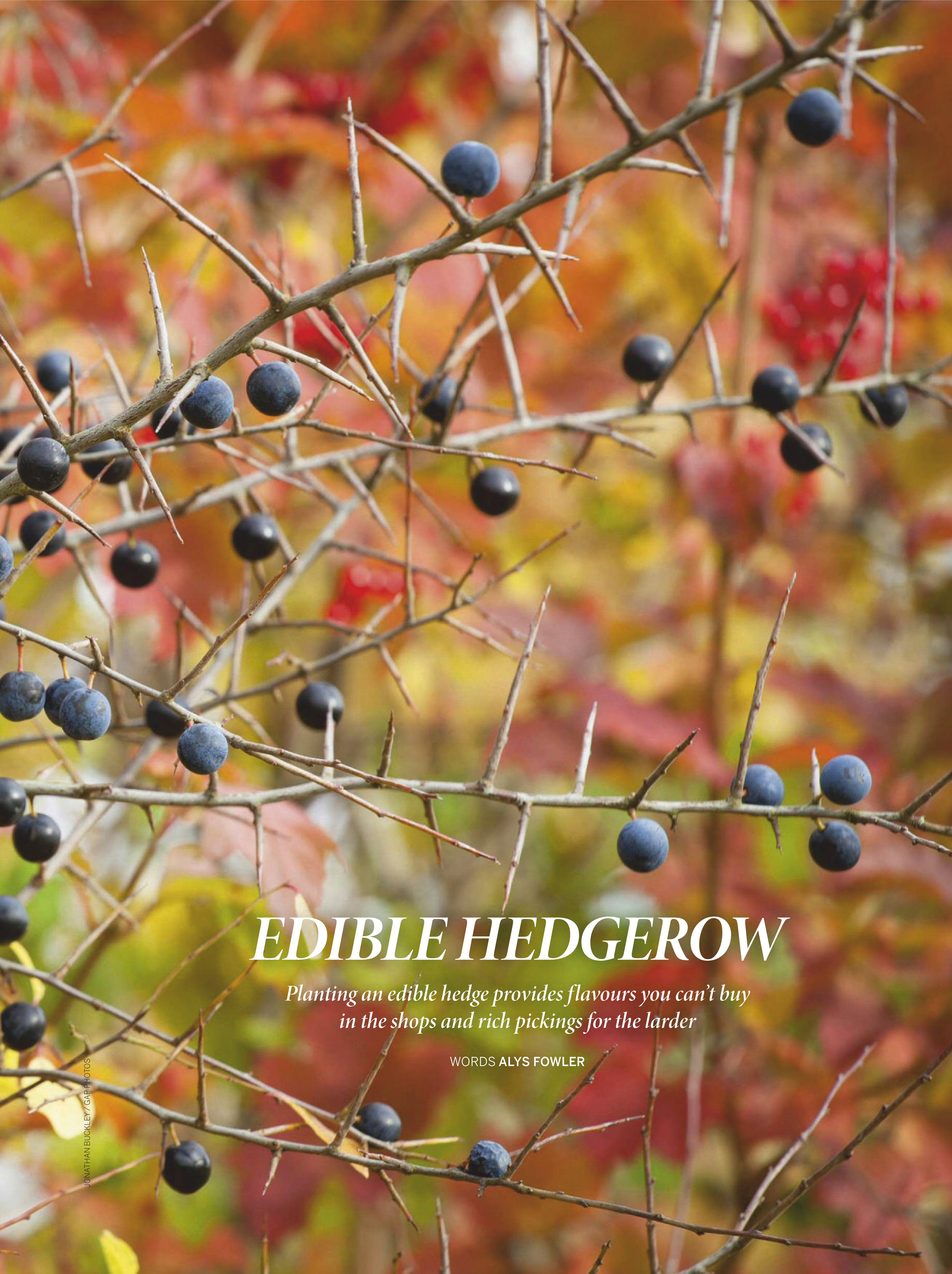
Gondwanaland, the ancient supercontinent that included present-day South America, Africa, Arabia, Madagascar, India, Australia and Antarctica, has been reimagined at Marks Hall as an otherworldly landscape of soaring eucalyptus trees, great clumps of pampas grass and the largest plantation of Wollemi pines in Europe.

The Wollemi is one of the world's oldest and rarest plants. Just 100 mature trees are thought to exist in the wild, and this 'living fossil' was only rediscovered in 1994, growing in a hidden valley in Australia. Commercial propagation has since helped to fund the preservation of the wild community, and Ian plans to increase his existing plantation from 80 to 200 trees within the next five years, when the final tranche of Forestry Commission pine trees are felled.

Meanwhile, the eucalyptus grove Ian helped to plant as a college graduate is reaching maturity. In 2000, the site was land-formed with silt dredged from the lakes and planted up with a wide selection of different eucalypts. These arrived in three-litre pots, but today soar up to 12 metres into air scented with the pungent, essential oil from their aromatic, peeling bark. Vast clumps of creamily plumed *Cortaderia richardii*, *Cordyline australis* and spiky kniphofias punctuate the ground to either side of the path that winds through this mystical space.



Prunus spinosa
Also known as blackthorn or sloe, its prickly stems make an excellent stock-proof barrier. Five-petalled white flowers in spring are followed by blue-black fruits in autumn. Use three plants per metre for a single row, or five per metre for staggered double hedge. 3.5m. RHS H7[†].



EDIBLE HEDGEROW

Planting an edible hedge provides flavours you can't buy in the shops and rich pickings for the larder

WORDS **ALYS FOWLER**

JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS

Imagine a boundary that is rich in wild flavours, alive with spring blossom, peppered with autumn colour and a feast for foraging from fat hips to intense berries and wild-tasting apples. A good edible hedge provides flavours you truly can't buy in the shops and offers a wealth of preserving opportunities.

Your choice of what to include will inevitably be limited by the size and conditions of your garden. Urban and smaller gardens need plants that will thrive from clipping but still fruit well. *Rosa rugosa*, Japanese quince, juneberry and sea buckthorn are all tolerant of a wide range of conditions and can be clipped to suit the size of the garden. But if your garden can accommodate a wilder, country hedge then larger species, such as elderberries, crab apples, pears and damsons, which can grow into substantial boundaries could be an option.

With many of the best edible hedging choices you have the option to choose the common or the cultivated. You may be lucky enough for a bird to deposit a bramble, or you could choose a cultivar with an interesting leaf or a particular flavour. *Rubus fruticosus* 'Ashton Cross' is a wild-selected bramble with wiry stems and vast numbers of small to medium berries suited to freezing and preserving. *R. fruticosus* 'Oregon Thornless', as its name suggests, has smooth stems and is semi-vigorous with deeply cut attractive leaves. One of its parents is the cut-leaved blackberry, *Rubus laciniatus,* which I think has one of the finest flavours going, if you don't mind its truly beastly thorns and vigorous habitat. Not one for a small hedge, but if you have space to let it ramble, it's a handsome thing.

For a splash of colour, you could add an elderberry. Cultivars, such as *Sambucus nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Gerda', with its pink flowers, *S. nigra* f. *porphyrophylla* 'Eva' with its lacy leaves, or golden elder, *S. nigra* 'Aurea', which has yellow-green leaves, all fit the bill. But an elderberry is not a subject for a tidy hedge; in the middle of a hedge, it tends to out compete its neighbours. Elderberries do best either on the end of the hedge line or allowed to grow as a tree within the hedge where you'll get more flowers and fruits. Sloes or blackthorns (*Prunus spinosa*), are another good choice. Their vicious thorns create a perfect hideaway for birds, their flowers are much loved by bees, and their fruits are delicious infused in gin. It is shade tolerant and combines well with other native hedging, such as crab apples and dogwoods.

Of the many plums that can be allowed to grow into a wilder hedge, damson and mirabelle are my favourites. Both are cultivar groups of *Prunus insititia*; the damson is deep purple, dense, slightly dry and irresistible in jam while the more astringent, rounder, golden mirabelle is perfect for a plum tart. They do need to be allowed to grow tall and if you want plenty of fruit they can't be clipped into a neat row. Both do best in south- or west-facing positions, in slightly moist soil that is neutral to acidic. In exposed areas, they are liable to have all their flowers frosted. If you're battling biting sea winds and hill-top conditions then sea buckthorn, *Hippophae rhamnoides*, might be your jam. Its brilliantly tart berries are excellent for cooking with and it is incredibly tolerant of poor soil conditions.

Then there are crab apples (*Malus sylvestris*), wild pears (*Pyrus communis*), small but delicious, and the handsome quince (*Cydonia oblonga*), which will need to be left to grow as a tree within the hedge. But the Japanese quince (*Chaenomeles japonica*), can be clipped into a neat, low hedge. You could combine it with the juneberry (*Amelanchier* x *lamarckii*), which isn't a tree many think of as a hedge subject, but it makes a mighty fine one.

Whatever you end up choosing, a good hedgerow can truly offer a banquet for everyone from you to song birds and insects. From early spring right into winter these hedgerows can offer pollen, nectar and berries that persist deep into the frosts, as well as varied overwintering habitat for many different species. The spiny stems of sloe, for example, offer birds a safe nesting place away from cats where they can shelter from the worst of the winter weather with a ready food source. Hopefully they'll leave some rich pickings for your larder too. ❑

• Author Alys Fowler is a gardener and garden writer. Her recommendations for the best edible hedging plants can be found over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

What Edible trees and shrubs suitable for hedgerows. A mixed deciduous informal hedge that can be foraged for its edible offerings. This sort of hedging has many uses, it benefits wildlife year-round, offering nectar, pollen, fruit, shelter and nest habitats. It can be used to create a shelter belt to minimise wind or screen out unsightly views and lastly, but by no means not least, it offers seasonal foraging.

Origins Most of the plants shown are native to Europe, many to the UK.

Season Spring flowers, autumn harvesting and colour.

Size From small shrubs that measure less than a metre to trees of more than 10m.

Conditions Suitable for a wide range of conditions and soils.

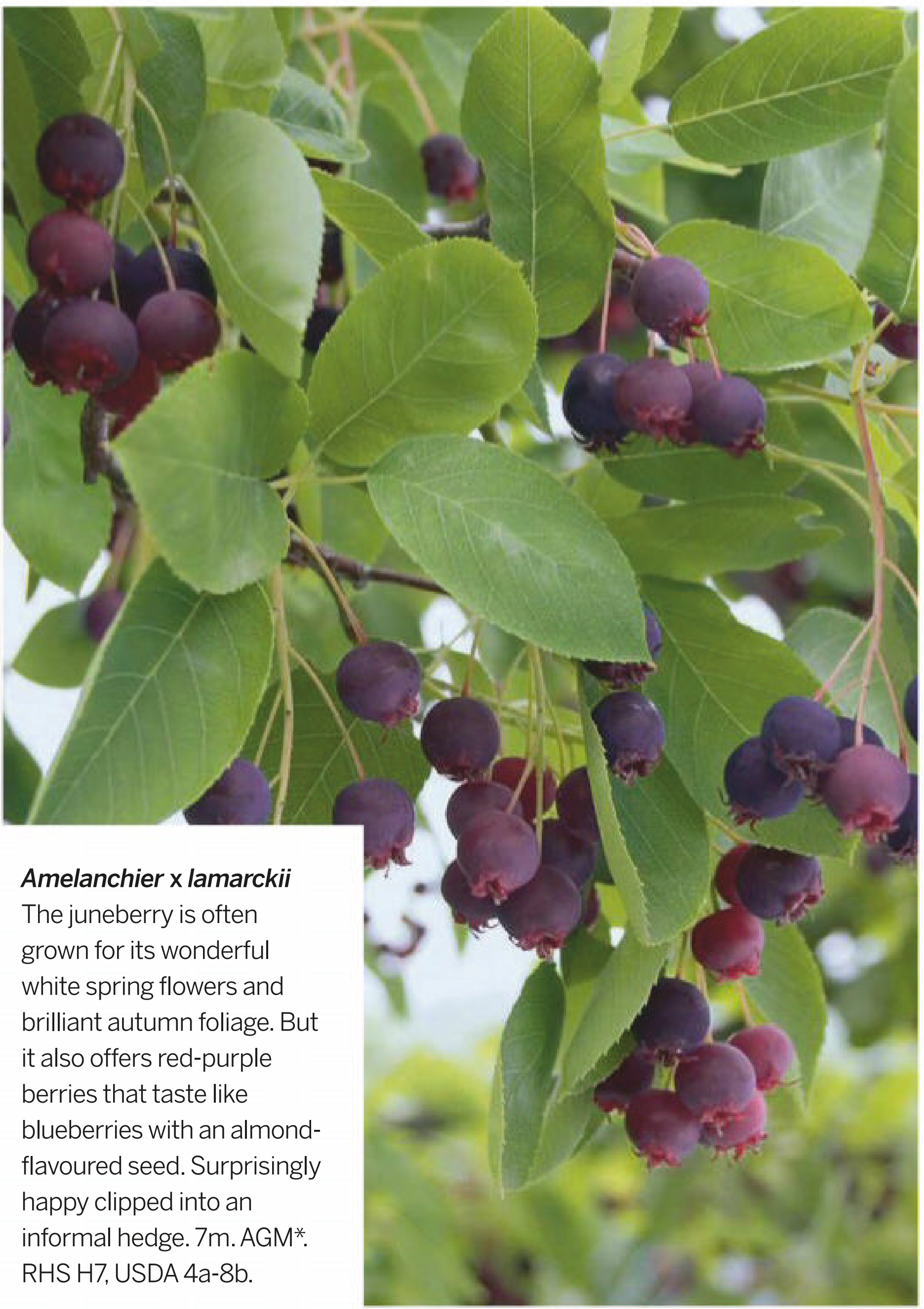
Hardiness All are fully hardy, with a hardiness rating of RHS H6-H7, and and are suitable for gardens in USDA zones 4a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

JONATHAN BUCKLEY

Rubus fruticosus
Blackberry or bramble can be used as a single-species hedge in a double row, with five plants per metre, 33cm between plants and 40cm between rows, or in a mixed hedge with one plant every 5m or so. 1.5m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

Sambucus nigra
Common elder, is a wild thing and doesn't like to be clipped, so best as an informal hedge or at the end of a mixed hedge where it can grow taller. Two to three per metre, 33-50cm apart. 2.5-6m. USDA 5a-8b.



Corylus avellana
The hazelnut is a cheap and effective way to bulk out a hedge. It's extremely fast growing, and also very tolerant of a wide range of soils and shade tolerant. Two to three per metre for a single row, five per metre for staggered, double rows, 40cm apart. 3-6m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Prunus insititia
This wild plum or damson has sharp spurs and a dense habit that means it can be grown as a large hedge subject or as a standalone tree. The sweetest fruit comes from a sunny position. Three plants per metre, 33cm apart. 3-4m. RHS H6.

Amelanchier* x *lamarckii
The juneberry is often grown for its wonderful white spring flowers and brilliant autumn foliage. But it also offers red-purple berries that taste like blueberries with an almond-flavoured seed. Surprisingly happy clipped into an informal hedge. 7m. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

Chaenomeles japonica
Japanese quince is ideal for urban and small gardens. Thorny, criss-crossing branches make a dense hedge, which flowers from January. Round, yellow, blush-orange or pink fruits can be cooked like quince. Three plants per metre, 33cm apart. 90cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

OPPOSITE: JAN SMITH / GAP PHOTOS. THIS PAGE: WILD DALES PHOTOGRAPHY – SIMON PHILLPOTTS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; NOVA PHOTOGRAPHIK, KEITH BUDETT AND MADDIE THORNHILL / ALL GAP PHOTOS

Cydonia oblonga
Quinces are truly the fruit of the gods with a divine scent to match their flavour. The large, pear-like, yellow fruits need cooking but they make an excellent jelly. The quince tree, must be grown as a tree within the hedge in a sheltered position. 2-4.5m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

Cornus mas
The Cornelian cherry is very early flowering, usually starting in February with small, yellow flowers that ripen to edible, bright-red fruits. Lovely autumn colour. Good for part shade. Three plants per metre, 3cm apart, 7.5m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

Hippophae rhamnoides
A prickly shrub with narrow, silver-green leaves that are tolerant of wind and salt spray. Its orange berries are delicious but very tart. Only females produce berries and tend to fruit only after six years. Three plants per metre, 33cm apart, 3.5m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

Pyrus communis
The wild pear flowers heavily in April, has glossy green leaves in summer, orange and gold foliage in autumn and produces tiny, but sweet pears that are perfect for jam. It also truly doesn't mind being clipped into a hedge. Three plants per metre, 33cm apart. 9m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

JONATHAN BUCKLEY, ROB WHITWORTH, MARTIN STAFFLER / ALL GAP PHOTOS; THE GARDEN COLLECTION/FP/FLPA

Malus sylvestris
Our native crab apple forms a dense, bushy tree that happily conforms to a hedge. In spring it offers pink-white flowers, then in autumn hard, tart fruits that make a delicious jelly and are good for adding pectin to jams. Three plants per metre, 33cm apart. 5-10m. RHS H6.

Rosa canina
The dog rose makes a wonderful informal hedge. Let it romantically wind its way through the hedge and pick the hips for vitamin C-rich syrups. Five plants per metre, 33cm apart. *Rosa rugosa* is another good choice, and is suitable for a windy or seaside location. 1.5m. RHS H7.

BLICKWINKEL / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; NOVA PHOTO GRAPHIK / GAP PHOTOS

Cultivation

Establishing these hedges can be simple, either as a single row or staggered into two or three rows for a thicker affair. If you are in a wind-ripped, coastal area it might be wise to think of using wind-mitigating netting to allow the hedge to get growing upright. You can get young whips into the ground from October to March. Late autumn plantings tend to do better because they have had early winter to bed down and settle in and tend to make a march on spring growth.

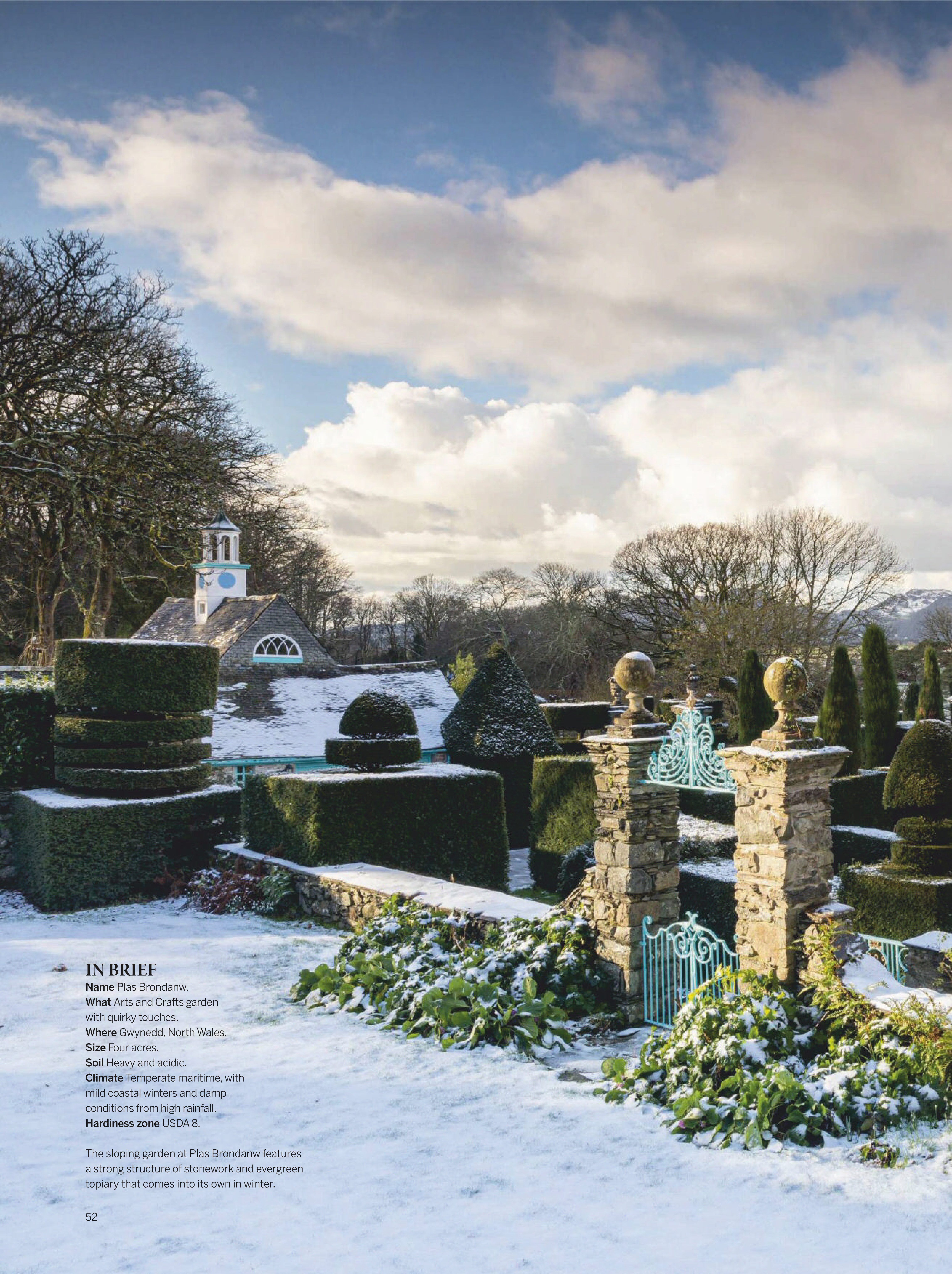
The general rule of thumb is that you need to plant five bare root whips per metre for a hedgerow in two rows so that the plants are staggered roughly 33cm apart. Often you can get bundle deals for country hedgerows in offers of 50, 100 or 250 plants and this might be a good starting point if you have large hedgerow to establish. You can always cherry pick some extra edibles to add to the hedge. Fifty plants roughly equates to 16m metres of a single row hedge or 10m of a double row.

Ideally, your soil should be soft enough to push a spade right the way in before planting. If it's not, you may want to consider rotavating or forking it over first. If you do it is wise to remove more persistent weeds at this stage as the ground does need to be clear. If you have well-rotted compost or manure then it's always a good idea to add a layer. It will keep the weeds down and help feed the plants, and it does not need to be dug in.

For large hedges, it makes sense to use a weed-suppressing membrane and plant into this, which will help keep down weeds and lock in moisture. Plastic membrane is more permanent but will eventually leach into the soil, so better to opt for an eco alternative, such as jute, wool or cardboard matting. You'll find these at suppliers such as Chimney Sheep (chimneysheep.co.uk) and Mulch Organic (mulchorganic.co.uk). Bare-root plants need to be planted at the depth of the soil mark on their main stems or if bought in containers to the depth they were in their pots. Firm in and prune back the tips of leggy plants and water in well. If you have deer or rabbits you will need to use guards. And it goes without saying that it is essential that you continue to water your hedge in dry weather as it establishes for the first year of its life.

Where to buy

- **Ashridge Nurseries**
  Grove Cross Barn, Castle Cary, Somerset BA7 7NJ.
  Tel 01963 359444,
  ashridgetrees.co.uk
  Mail order company with a wide selection of hedging and excellent planting advice.
- **Ashwood Nurseries**
  Ashwood Lower Lane, Kingswinford, West Midlands DY6 0AE.
  Tel 01384 401996,
  ashwoodnurseries.com
- **Barcham Trees**
  Eye Hill Drove, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 5XF.
  Tel 01353 720950,
  barcham.co.uk
- **Buckingham Nurseries and Garden Centre**
  Twingewick Road, Buckingham, MK18 4AE.
  Tel 01280 815491,
  hedging.co.uk
- **Burncoose Nurseries**
  Gwennap, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ.
  Tel 01209 860316,
  burncoose.co.uk
- **Hedges Direct**
  Tel 01257 494009,
  hedgesdirect.co.uk
  Mail order hedging specialist.
- **Chew Valley Trees**
  Winford Road, Chew Magna, Bristol BS40 8HJ.
  Tel 01275 333752,
  chewvalleytrees.co.uk
- **Majestic Trees**
  Chequers Meadow, Chequers Hill, Flamstead, nr St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 8ET.
  Tel 01582 843881,
  majestictrees.co.uk
- **Peter Beales Roses**
  London Road, Attleborough, Norwich, Norfolk NR17 1AY.
  Tel 01953 454707,
  classicroses.co.uk



IN BRIEF

Name Plas Brondanw.
What Arts and Crafts garden with quirky touches.
Where Gwynedd, North Wales.
Size Four acres.
Soil Heavy and acidic.
Climate Temperate maritime, with mild coastal winters and damp conditions from high rainfall.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

The sloping garden at Plas Brondanw features a strong structure of stonework and evergreen topiary that comes into its own in winter.

Fine work

For his own Arts and Craft garden in North Wales, the architect Clough Williams-Ellis employed many of the same elements of wit and charm he used in his most famous creation, Portmeirion

WORDS **STEPHANIE MAHON** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**

Since she arrived at Plas Brondanw in 2018, Kimberley Davison has been doing some investigative gardening. The head gardener at the North Wales estate has several mysteries to solve, including where a small, cobblestone path she uncovered was meant to go, and what the large topiary shapes in the garden were originally meant to be. “A bird?” she muses, looking up at one. “Now it looks like a snail.” She points to another. “We call that one the Teapot, but it’s more like a bobble hat. You just have to embrace how they grow.”

The need for a certain amount of guesswork is not an unusual problem when revitalising an old private garden such as this. Luckily for Kimberley, there are some records available to help guide her, including the plans, notes and letters of late owner Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, the famous 20th-century architect. The garden surrounds his old family seat, which he inherited in his twenties, and lies in picturesque splendour between the mountains and the sea in Snowdonia National Park.

Williams-Ellis designed properties all over the UK and abroad, but was best known as the creator of Portmeirion, the surreal, Riviera-style village perched on the cliffs nearby at Minffordd – the perfect setting for 1960s nightmare-fantasy TV show *The Prisoner*. His work at Plas Brondanw shares the Italianate influence, but in a much more understated way.

Although Williams-Ellis spent a large part of his life designing Portmeirion, it was his own garden at Plas Brondanw, created over many decades, that he was most devoted to. ‘It was for Brondanw’s sake that I worked and stinted, for its sake that I chiefly hoped to prosper,’ he once wrote. ‘A cheque of ten pounds would come in and I would order yew hedging to that extent, a cheque for twenty and I would pave a further piece of terrace.’

This piecemeal approach is evident in the layout of the garden, which, apart from the terrace and lawn in front of the house, comprises many small compartments of different sizes and characters. “It’s all added on,” Kimberley explains. “Whenever he got a bit of money, he would buy another little parcel of land, finish that, and move out again.” As the garden expanded in size, he connected these ‘rooms’ to each other with pathways and glimpses through small openings. He then linked everything to the surrounding countryside with framed vistas of the rolling landscape and mountain peaks.

The strong, architectural feel is grounded with local stone used for all the features, from the Orangery to the steps, ponds, fountains and gateposts, but there are plenty of quirks and contrasts too, including the bright, turquoise-painted ironwork (repeated at Portmeirion and all over the local area). The statuary, which at first glance appears typically classical, includes a mini-fireman with working hose and several interesting cheats and copies. There is a sense of winking fun here and there, rounding off the edges of what otherwise seems to be an ode to the Arts and Crafts style.

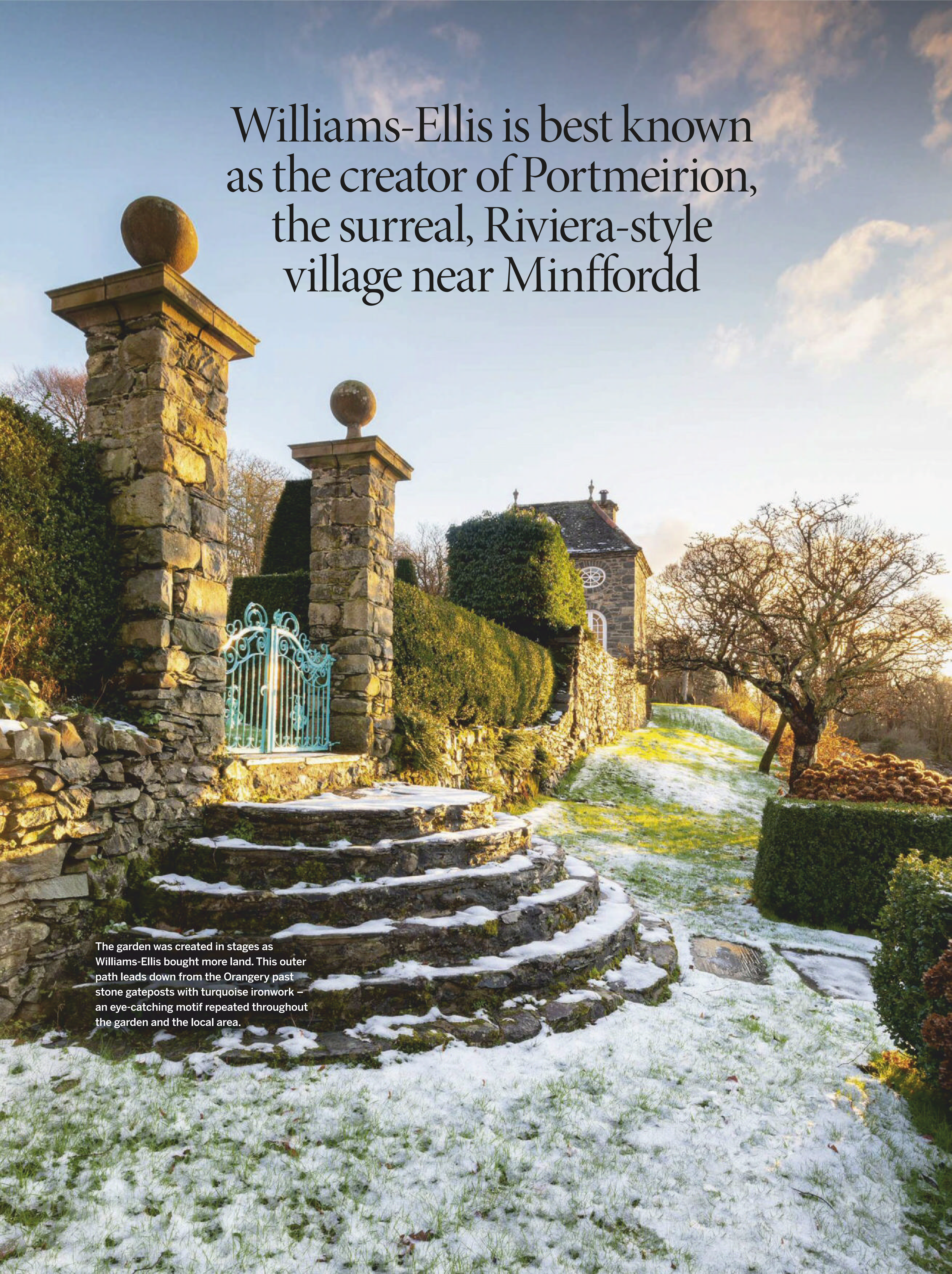
Brondanw is also a very green garden, with a backbone of yew and box, which makes it ideal for visiting in winter, when the evergreen structure is lightly sugared with frost. There are, however, several bursts of colourful blooms throughout the year, which is something Kimberley plans to develop further. This is nothing like Kimberley’s previous roles, in the kitchen garden at Clumber Park in Nottinghamshire or the glasshouses at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. But her future plans, and those of the trust that governs the garden, are to simplify things, to tone down the dissonant, overdone elements of the planting and design in a sensible, sympathetic way – both for good taste, and to help keep the maintenance manageable. So far, Kimberley has cleaned and repaired the pools, removed some beds and reworked the planting in others, and tackled overgrown hedging and a bout of box blight.

But whatever comes next, she is determined to retain the special atmosphere of this extraordinary place, which, she says, is never what people expect. “I want to develop the feeling I had when I first visited – a sort of 19th-century, pleasure-ground experience,” she says. “Ducking under leaves, and squeezing through gaps in hedges, not knowing what’s around the corner. It’s like a secret garden, a little fantasy land. It’s overshadowed by Portmeirion, and overlooked much of the time, but I believe it can really hold its own.” ❑

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Plas Brondanw, Llanfrothen, Gwynedd LL48 6SW.
Website plasbrondanw.com **Open** 10am-4pm daily throughout the year.

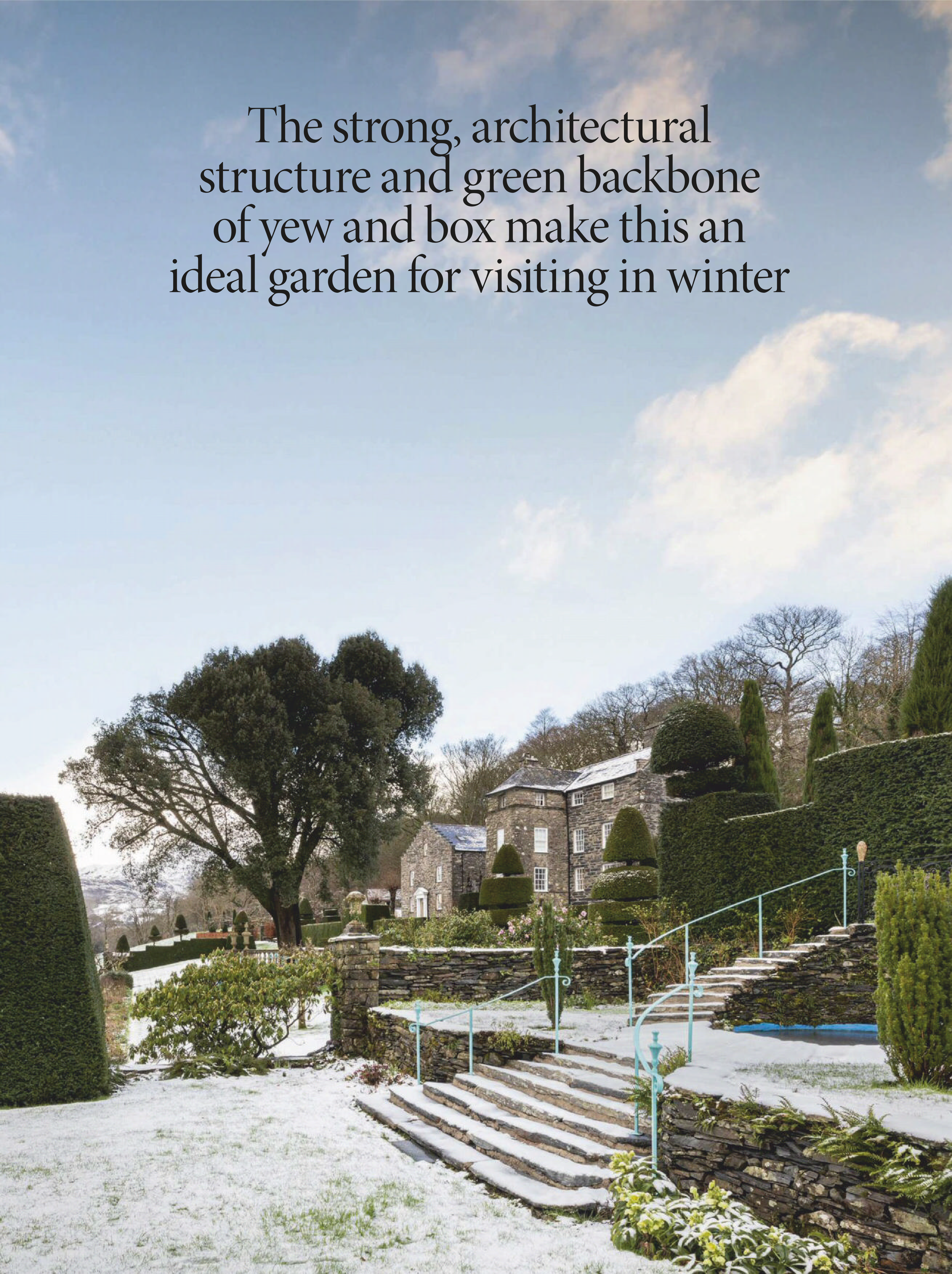
Turn the page to see more of Plas Brondanw ▷

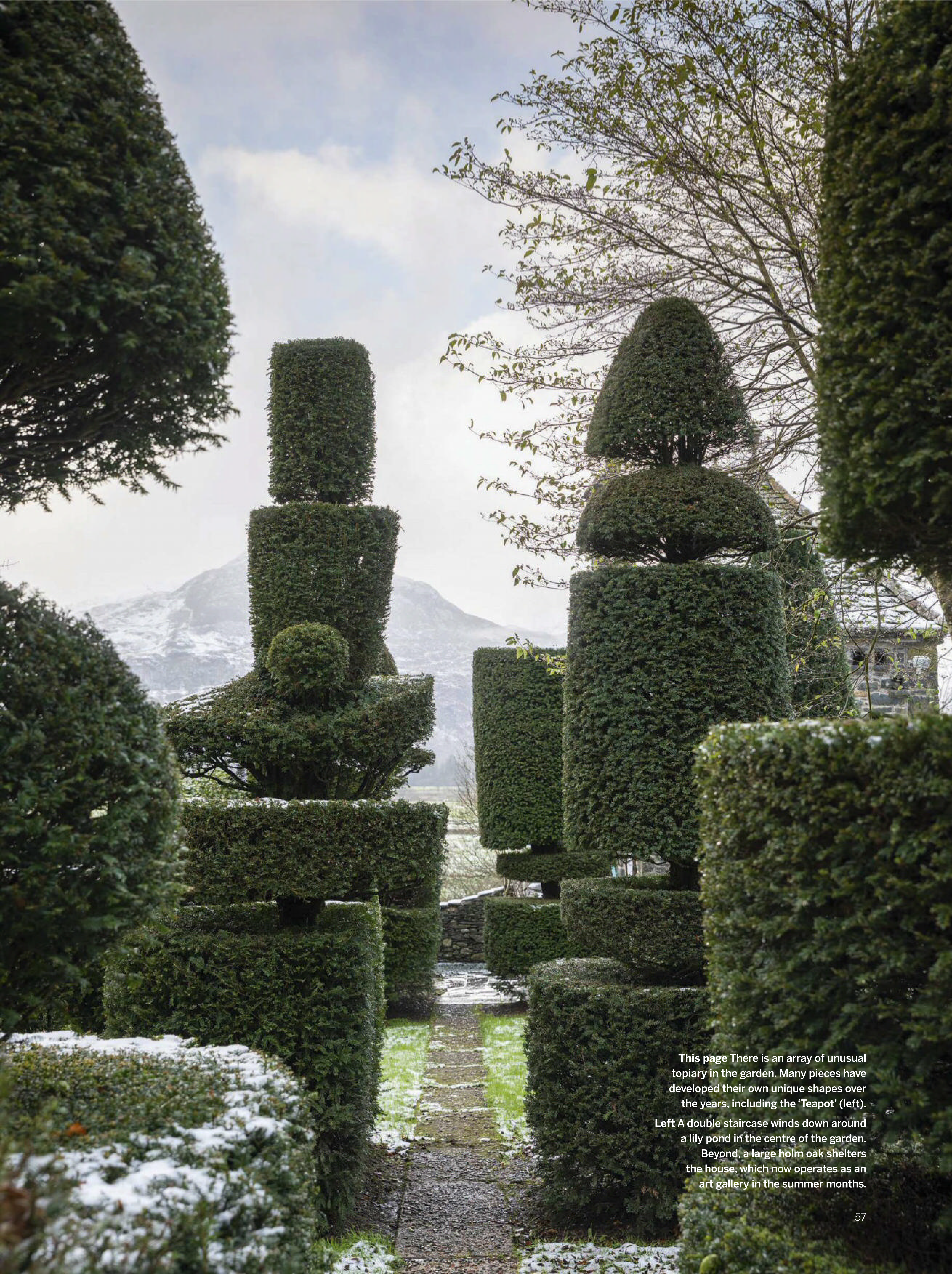


Williams-Ellis is best known as the creator of Portmeirion, the surreal, Riviera-style village near Minffordd

The garden was created in stages as Williams-Ellis bought more land. This outer path leads down from the Orangery past stone gateposts with turquoise ironwork – an eye-catching motif repeated throughout the garden and the local area.

The strong, architectural structure and green backbone of yew and box make this an ideal garden for visiting in winter





This page There is an array of unusual topiary in the garden. Many pieces have developed their own unique shapes over the years, including the 'Teapot' (left).

Left A double staircase winds down around a lily pond in the centre of the garden. Beyond, a large holm oak shelters the house, which now operates as an art gallery in the summer months.

Williams-Ellis worked in increments, creating many small compartments of different sizes and characters

This page Williams-Ellis based his design on views both within the garden and without, framing vistas of the surrounding countryside,and repeating shapes to mimic the peaks of nearby mountains.

Right On the site of an old slate quarry, across the road from the garden, is a waterfall known as the Cascade. Above this is a ruined tower folly known as Pentwr, built to take advantage of the magnificent views.

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

ANDY McINDOE

The Veitch Memorial Medal holder and the man behind 25 of Hillier's gold-medal winning displays at Chelsea, on his love of shrubs and the importance of using planting that works

WORDS ANNIE GATTI PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

The concrete path leading up to Sandhill Farm, Andy McIndoe's home in a wooded part of Hampshire, has to double as a hard standing for deliveries of plants. Dozens of potted lavenders are ranked there, the day I visit. "These are for a garden I'm planting but they're not good enough," explains Andy, pointing out a few that are a little bit splayed, and then adds firmly. "They're going back."

Practical horticulture, for which Andy was awarded the Veitch Memorial Medal by the RHS in 2017, has dominated Andy's professional life since leaving university but it's also the mainstay of the home life he shares with his wife Ros, also a trained horticulturist, at this two-acre, plant-rich garden. "Someone asked me the other day what are your other interests, and I said I don't have any really apart from our own garden."

Andy grew up in Leamington Spa where at a young age he got the growing bug. By his early teens he had taken over his mother's greenhouse to try out exotics, in particular orchids. A Saturday job at a local florist's sparked a love of flower arranging and his horticulture degree at Bath University, gave him experience of local authority horticulture, a small independent garden centre, and commercial nursery production on a vast scale at Bruns Pflanzen in Germany. There he soaked up the mix of traditional skills, such as cultivating the rows between conifers by horse-drawn plough, and modern techniques including mobile raised platforms for pruning. After university he was tempted to return to Germany but a job came up as assistant manager of the Hillier Garden Centre in Winchester, and he took it. He thought he'd be there for a few months but finally left 37 years later, in 2015, having become the company's first managing director outside the family, and having overseen its expansion from one to 12 garden centres.

> SOMEONE ASKED ME THE OTHER DAY WHAT ARE YOUR OTHER INTERESTS, AND I SAID I DON'T HAVE ANY REALLY APART FROM OUR OWN GARDEN

When he arrived, garden centres were ripe for change and Andy was given free rein to experiment. He realised that customers were hungry for sound advice and planting recommendations so he set up basic horticultural courses for the staff who came from different walks of life. He particularly enjoyed the contact with customers and shared his enthusiasm for plants through flower demonstrations, talks and garden tours. The RHS Chelsea Flower Show brought him into the public eye but he's quick to point out that the success of the Hillier exhibits in the Grand Pavilion, and of his 25 gold medals as their designer, was thanks to a team effort, particularly to plantsman Ricky Dorlay's prepping of the plant material and the hands-on planting by members of staff, students and volunteer helpers. Andy's role was akin to that of a conductor, drawing the best performance out of individual players. "Once you've got people into the mindset of not crowding the plant material but thinking about variety of form and how the colours work together, they can come up with inspired combinations," he explains.

Andy is still involved in the show, orchestrating the plant displays at Jardin Blanc [Raymond Blanc's garden restaurant oasis at the Chelsea Flower Show], but as he describes that work I sense that he misses the cut and thrust of competitive Chelsea.

Andy's departure from Hillier's was timely for him in two ways. "Over the years I felt that garden centres were moving away from plants and people and I was getting frustrated with having to worry about toilet facilities, spreadsheets and menus." Also, there was still time for him to embark on an independent career, using his skills to lecture, run online gardening courses, offer garden consultancy to private clients, and write books. His latest book, *Shrubs: Discover the Perfect Plant for Every Place in Your Garden*, is a follow-up to *The Creative Shrub Garden*, which shows how using combinations of just three carefully selected plants can be enough to create distinctive moods or styles. Why did he feel the need to write another practical book on shrubs, I wondered. "It started from my idea for a book on permanent planting for pots and containers, and then was expanded to include other situations. If you're concerned about sustainability, low-maintenance and all-year-round interest you've got to be thinking of using your bedding and seasonal subjects as additions to the permanent planting." The book devotes sections to the best shrubs for compacted soils, in Andy's view one of the biggest challenges for owners of new-build gardens, and for narrow beds, a feature of many of our increasingly small gardens.

Sandhill Farm is a lesson in creating interest largely from the textures, shapes and forms of shrubs, trees and perennials. It's astonishing to think the whole space was created from scratch, less than 20 years ago. Andy attributes its maturity to right plant, right place. "We all want to experiment, that's the nature of gardening, but for your foundation planting, plant what works." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Andy's work at andymcindoe.com

Andy's latest book *Shrubs, Discover the Perfect Plant for Every Place in Your Garden* (Timber Press, £24.99) is one of our books of the year. For your chance to win a copy see page 95.

Celebrate well

Grower and florist Charlie Ryrie demonstrates techniques for creating exquisite, natural Christmas decorations at home, using found, foraged and cut materials

WORDS AND STYLING **CHARLIE RYRIE** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**

BIRD'S NEST WREATH

Materials and tools

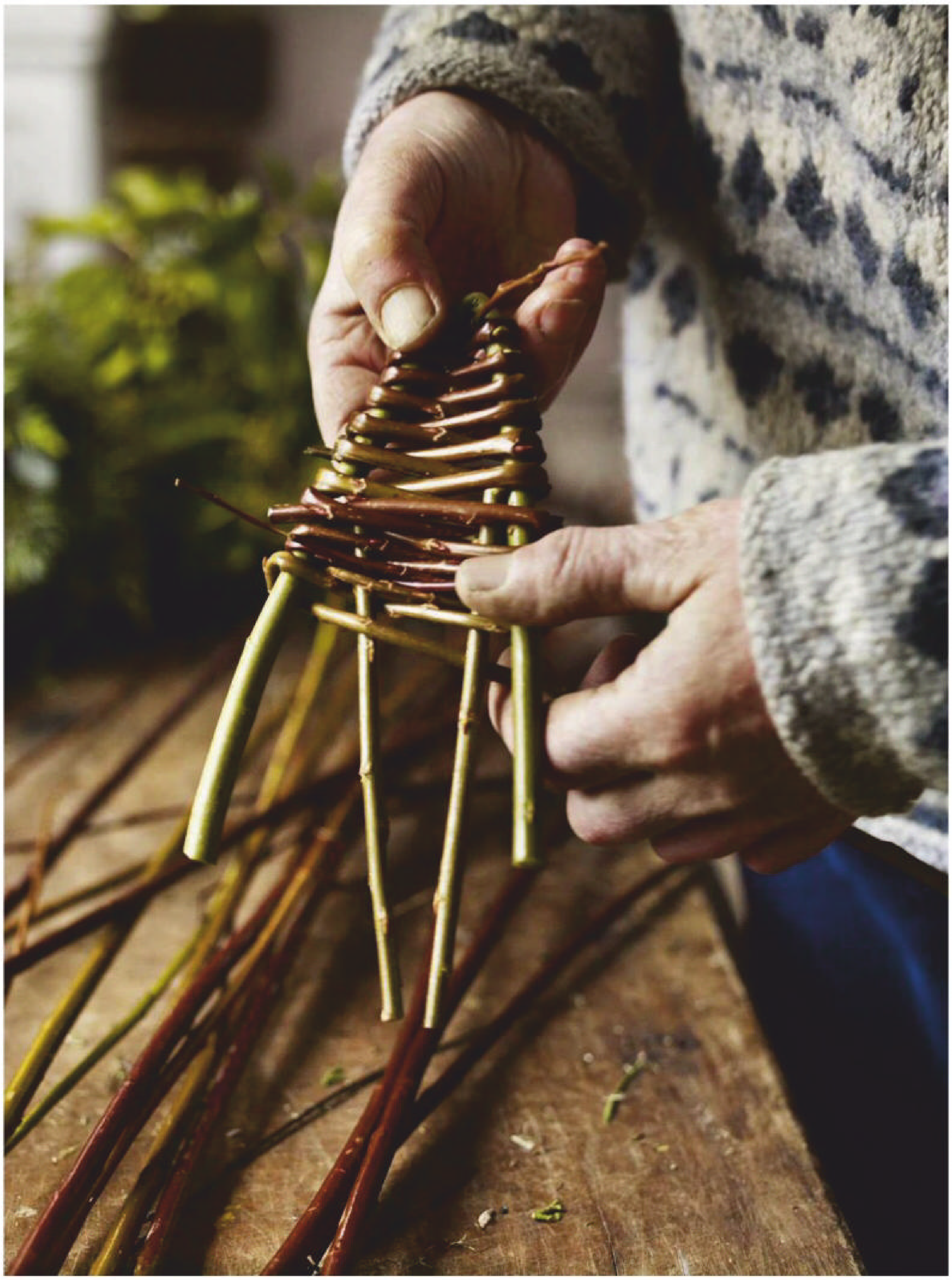
Snips; natural twine; 8 plain or coloured willow rods 1.2-1.5m long, freshly picked from hedgerow or garden, or soaked in water for 24 hours to make them pliable; 3-5 larch (*Larix decidua*) stems at least 60cm, with cones; 3-5 alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) stems at least 60cm, with cones and catkins; length of old man's beard (*Clematis vitalba*); 5 x 30-50cm pieces of curly willow (*Salix* x *sepulcralis* 'Erythroflexuosa') or yellow dogwood (*Cornus sericea* 'Flaviramea'); ribbon or braid to finish.

To make

A willow hoop forms the base of this wreath. The willow must be pliable so use freshly cut stems or soak dry willow in water for a day to soften it. If the willow is too dry, it will snap when you try to bend it. For a hoop 20-30cm in diameter, start with a willow rod at least 1.3m long and twist it into a circle, starting from the thicker end. When you have the size you want, weave the rest of the rod in and out around the circle to hold the shape. Take a second length of willow and tuck the thick end into your frame, about 10cm on from the thicker end of the first piece. This will hold it in place while you wrap the piece around the circle. Do this with six to eight rods until the hoop feels rigid. Finish off by tying the thinnest end around the hoop. Thick ends will stick out from the circle at various points; cut them off with sharp snips and the hoop will maintain its shape.

Tuck lengths of alder in and out round the hoop, then do the same with the larch. Aim for a pleasing shape; you should be able to maintain the circle and keep everything in place by winding the stems round the willow hoop, but you may prefer to tie the alder and larch to the willow with a few short lengths of twine. Next, place a few lengths of old man's beard around the twiggy wreath, then poke curly willow stems through the other materials and wrap them round, leaving the ends flying free.

I use woollen braid for the hanging loop, but for extra attitude try sumptuous velvet or any luxurious trimming.



HANGING DECORATIONS

Materials and tools

Snips; natural twine; 20 thin, pliable willow rods 90cm-1.2m long for the stars; 20 slightly thicker, coloured willow rods 90cm-1.2m for the Christmas trees – use willow freshly harvested from hedgerow or garden, or soaked in water for 24 hours; some interestingly shaped beech or alder branches with seedcases still attached.

To make

The stars are perfect to make with small children; older ones will enjoy making the trees.

To make a star, take a length of thin, pliable willow 50-60cm long. Bend it into a capital M shape with each side 8cm long and a long tail, then straighten it out so you have crease marks.

Hold one end of the willow and form the numeral 4 with the long tail forming the horizontal bar. Take this long piece behind the vertical upright, then bend and thread it through the centre of the 4, taking it over the vertical bar and under the angled side. Bend it again to thread the remaining length back over the angled side and under the horizontal bar to join the bottom of the vertical upright, forming a five-point star.

If the willow is very thin and pliable, wind the end round the bottom of the upright; otherwise take a short piece of twine and tie the two ends together, leaving a tail or snipping it off below the tied point. It may take a few goes to get this right.

For the tree, make an upturned V shape and weave willow around it in a figure-of-eight pattern. When the willow runs out, just start with a new rod and when you have woven about half the tree insert two willow pieces to make the trunk – they will be secured by the weave – and keep weaving. Tuck the ends inside as you work and snip off any long bits when you finish.

Hang your decorations with coloured twine from a few branches of beech or alder in a favourite pot.

OVERSIZED WREATH

Materials and tools

Snips; natural twine; 30 willow rods 1.2-1.5m long, freshly picked from hedgerow or garden, or soaked in water for 24 hours to make them pliable; large bundle of greenery, such as a selection of Leyland cyprus (x *Cupressocyparis leylandii*), juniper (*Juniperus communis*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), bay (*Laurus nobilis*) and cider gum (*Eucalyptus gunnii*); 10-20 sprigs of curly willow (*Salix* x *sepulcralis* 'Erythroflexuosa') or yellow dogwood (*Cornus sericea* 'Flaviramea'); length of old man's beard (*Clematis vitalba*).

To make

This giant, green wreath looks particularly inviting on a barn door but could be used to decorate any bare external wall. Its base is also a willow hoop, this time made on the ground. Cut ten pieces of willow to make pegs about 20cm long, with one pointed end. For a 1m-diameter wreath, tie a 50cm length of string on to one peg, and place it in the ground. This will be the centre of your circle. Stretch out the string and place the first peg at the point where the string ends, then place the other eight pegs at regular intervals around the central peg, using string to measure their positions.

Weave lengths of willow between the pegs, pressing them firmly together and starting each new length by tucking the ends in just before a peg. You don't need a single willow rod for each layer of the circle, just keep tucking the ends in with each new length. After five or six layers, pull the hoop upwards from the pegs, leaving them in the ground.

Twist more lengths of willow over and under the hoop to make it secure. Weave any ends into the hoop. Then decorate your wild hoop by tucking and poking lengths of greenery into the woven willow at regular intervals, building it up until you are satisfied with the distribution and texture.

The only rule is to add all the green material in the same direction. You can use pieces of twine to secure the greenery, but the more materials you add, the less likely you are to need extra ties and the wreath can be self-supporting. The longer you cut your greenery, the looser the wreath will be. If you want it tighter, just use shorter pieces.

Charlie Ryrie founded The Real Cut Flower Garden in 2003, providing home-grown flowers and foliage for events and courses. Join her on 20 or 23 November to spend a day making natural Christmas decorations from preserved foliages and natural materials in her studio in Dorset. Details on cutflowergarden.co.uk
For more Christmas decoration ideas visit gardensillustrated.com/christmas

THE LOST ORCHARD

"I began to dream about an orchard filled with thousands of fruit trees," recalls chef Raymond Blanc. "Today at Belmond Le Manoir we have an orchard with over 150 ancient cultivar of apple. Each one has its heritage in a village or a county that used to thrive on that particular cultivar. They tell the story not only of what we have lost in Britain but also what we could regain."

WORDS **RAYMOND BLANC** ILLUSTRATIONS **CLARE MELINSKY**

My approach to the food we grow at Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons has always been the same: I want to understand the nuances of every cultivar in order to discover which cooking technique will suit it best, and with my team we go to extraordinary lengths to do this, whether it is tasting 50 aubergines or 40 chillies (an eye-watering experience!).

The orchard is about heritage and beauty, but crucially it is also about flavour; and so we needed to discover which apples to grow for the kitchen. I have never understood my British friends' approach of splitting apples into just two single categories – cooking and eating – or perhaps three, if you add in cider apples. The Victorians identified certain, more acidic, apples as destined for the kitchen, and other 'dessert' apples for enjoying raw. However, they also understood which of the 'cooking' apples, in which season, would make the best sauce, jellies, pies, soufflés or dumplings. But much of that old knowledge has been lost, and it is still far too restrictive for me.

So I set my own five specific tests. I wanted to know which apple would give the best juice and how each cultivar would behave when puréed, baked whole, in a tarte Maman Blanc [Raymond's signature apple tart, based on his mother's recipe] or a tarte tatin. I consulted my expert friends about which apples to taste, especially the most treasured heritage varieties, and then [local apple expert] Marcus Roberts scoured orchards and walled gardens around the country to assemble the very best sun-kissed examples. Over an exhausting two weeks we tested and tasted over a hundred apples and it was a huge and valuable undertaking, the like of which I don't believe has been done in any other kitchen.

For juicing, you need a fruit with relatively high acidity and vitamin C to retain the colour. Usually green apples, like 'Granny Smith', make the best juices when you use the whole of the skin – although I must say the best apple juice I have ever tasted is made with the 'Egremont Russet'. For purée, or for a pie or crumble, the apple must be very moist and have enough acidity to break down quickly, like 'Cox's Orange Pippin' or 'Red Windsor'. I want an appetising colour and characterful flavour that needs no sugar or hardly any at all.

For baking a whole apple, I want a fruit like 'Chivers Delight' or 'D'Arcy Spice', which will hold its shape without blistering too much or worse, collapsing, while the flesh should remain moist and become meltingly soft. For a tarte tatin, an apple must be tight enough to hold its shape and also it must have a high acidity. Why? Because we are going to add caramel, and so the apple must combat the sweetness. Our favourites include 'Cox's Orange Pippin', 'Devonshire Quarrenden' and 'Granny Smith'. And for a tarte Maman Blanc, I am looking for an apple such as 'Captain Kidd' or 'Lord Lambourne', with the perfect balance of acidity and sugar, and enough texture to allow the crescents of apple to keep their shape, but fluff up, and turn a beautiful golden colour.

It was most important to me that our judges were not only our chefs, but our gardeners too – and anyone who happened to be passing by: a guest, a housekeeper… we are all inclusive! For the past 35 years my vision for Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons has been to bond together the garden and the kitchen. A chef needs to go out into the gardens and understand the provenance and seasonality of a fruit or vegetable, what are the best varieties for specific dishes, and how they are grown; and a gardener needs to come into the kitchen and understand how a fruit or vegetable has been affected by the weather, or its level of ripeness… all these small variables make a difference in terms of taste. When chefs and gardeners understand and respect each other and the challenges they each face, you have a marvellous creative environment and beautiful food for our guests.

So what did we learn together? Well, we found that most apples are good at something and some are good at a few. A handful, such as 'Adams's Pearmain', 'Devonshire Quarrenden' and 'Discovery' are good at many things; and a few shining stars like 'Cox's Orange Pippin', 'Red Windsor' and the rare 'Cheddar Cross' can achieve almost anything. Very occasionally an ancient cultivar turns out not to be very good at anything, as our rigorous examination exposed the truth that a romantic name and a treasured history may not always be enough to satisfy the demands of our changing gastronomy and our customers' expectations.

Also I have to acknowledge that, since every cultivar not only has its season, but its perfect moment when the balance of sugars and acidity combine to produce perfection, we may not have done justice to every one. Flavour depends much upon the season, and many varieties require a really hot summer to develop their highest qualities. Will Sibley, who has tasted thousands of apples and other fruits in his role as chairman of the trustees at the East Malling Research Centre, is as romantic as this Frenchman when it comes to searching for that moment. "When a particular cultivar ripens to a certain point on a certain day and the sugar levels are a perfect match for the flavenoids. That is when the magic happens, and you remember it forever," says Will. ❑

Turn the page for six of Raymond Blanc's favourite apples. ▷

‘CAPTAIN KIDD’

21 trees in my English orchard
ORIGIN Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, 1962
SEASON Mid-October
APPEARANCE Deep red
BEST FOR Eating fresh, juice and tarts

TASTING AND COOKING NOTES
Raw, this is an exciting apple: juicy, crunchy, with a tight flesh and fabulous flavours, and it made a delicious single-cultivar juice with a gentle and well-balanced sweetness and a big apple flavour. Baked whole it had an excellent texture and flavour, and in a tarte tatin the aromatics were seductive and layered, but the texture did not hold so well and there was not enough acidity to combat the caramel. No apple rated as highly in our tastings for the tarte Maman Blanc test. The tart looked glorious, fluffy and golden, and the acidity of the apple carried the sweetness and flavours with wonderful aromatics including a faint scent of rose petal.

GROWING NOTES
Has beautiful crimson blossom, is resistant to mildew and scab but can be prone to apple canker. It is a triploid cultivar. Harvested in mid-October, the apples can keep well through to January.

‘CHIVERS DELIGHT’

52 trees in my English orchard
ORIGIN Cambridge, around 1920
SEASON Mid-late October
APPEARANCE Slightly flattened, golden with orange-red flush
BEST FOR Eating fresh, juice, baking whole and tarte tatin

TASTING AND COOKING NOTES
Mostly classified as a ‘good eating apple’ but this pigeon-holing is a crying shame because I found it to have so many more exceptional and surprising qualities. Straight from the tree it is a joy: honeyed, yet refreshingly juicy, crisp, aromatic and delicately sweet; and it makes a delicious juice. Baked whole, it was a star: no collapsing here, the apple stood proud without a blister, firm but melting. It made a divine tarte tatin – somehow the wonderful honey flavours and perfume did not make the tart too sweet.

GROWING NOTES
Easy to grow in the garden and resistant to many pests, although prone to canker, the ‘Chivers Delight’ will do best in a sunny spot and autumn sunshine will produce the best fruit, as the apples ripen quite late in the season. If the apples are kept cool they can be stored until around January time.

‘DEVONSHIRE QUARRENDEN’

48 trees in my English orchard
ORIGIN Devon, 1678
SEASON August/September
APPEARANCE Deep crimson with occasional red flecks in the flesh
BEST FOR Eating fresh, purée, tarts and tarte tatin

TASTING AND COOKING NOTES
Now rarely seen, so its praises need to be sung. Juicy, with a great crunch and a surprising hint of strawberry, this is simply a delicious apple when eaten raw. It also made excellent juice and a very lovely purée, but was clearly not appropriate for baking whole, as the flesh remained too firm. Most remarkably, this old apple could have been made for the tarte Maman Blanc. The fluffy slices kept their distinctive character with a lovely balance of acidity and sweetness. And, what is even more exceptional, this apple also performed brilliantly in a tarte tatin – a feat that very few apples that make a good purée can achieve.

GROWING NOTES
The trees are a triploid cultivar [needs another apple to fertilise it], but crop well and are known to tolerate quite windy, wet locations (though some old-time gardeners recommend a sheltered location with light soils for best results).

‘EGREMONT RUSSET’

110 trees in my English orchard
ORIGIN Somerset, 1872
SEASON Late September/October
APPEARANCE Yellowy-gold to orangey-brown russet
BEST FOR Juice

TASTING AND COOKING NOTES

When an apple makes an extraordinary juice it can often mean that it doesn’t like to be puréed – and sadly this was the case with ‘Egremont Russet’. It baked whole quite well, but the flesh was rather meaty and dry. In a tarte Maman Blanc it had some good, layered perfume and richness, although that meatiness remained, so the apple slices were lacking in moisture. This was also a factor in the tarte tatin. Nevertheless, I love this apple and it has found its true place at Le Manoir aux Quat’Saisons as the base of our own apple juice.

GROWING NOTES

A good, small tree for a garden. It crops well, especially against a wall, where it can also be trained as an espalier, as it will do best in a sunny spot. It is late-flowering, so can avoid the frost. The fruit is resistant to scab, though the foliage can be affected, and it is vulnerable to woolly aphid. Late-picked apples will store through to December.

‘LORD LAMBOURNE’

26 trees in my English orchard
ORIGIN Bedfordshire, 1907
SEASON Mid September
APPEARANCE Bright red flush and streaks over gold
BEST FOR Tarts, eating fresh, juice

TASTING AND COOKING NOTES

Eaten from the tree, ‘Lord Lambourne’ is top tier. Crisp to the bite and with thin skin and juicy flesh, a big, layered, well-balanced flavour, with a little sugar present. Its juice was fabulous, and although it didn’t excel as a purée, baked whole or in a tarte tatin, it delighted us with one of the two best tarte Maman Blanc experiences of all the 112 apples tested. It was surpassed only by the tiniest of margins by the ultimate champion of the tarts: ‘Captain Kidd’.

GROWING NOTES

This is a good cultivar to grow in a garden, as the trees are quite compact, of medium vigour, and should give a good, regular, crop of apples. Also the cultivar is now largely disease-free. The trees are partial tip-bearers [fruit produced at the tips of branches] so it is best not to prune them heavily. Apples picked in mid-to-late September can be stored until November.

‘RED WINDSOR’

17 trees in my English orchard
ORIGIN Worcestershire, 1985
SEASON Late September
APPEARANCE Deep scarlet
BEST FOR Everything

TASTING AND COOKING NOTES

This is such a wonderful apple so I have to ask, why can we not find it in shops and supermarkets? At its peak of ripeness it had all the qualities of a great apple: crisp and juicy with a big injection of rich, layered flavours, acidity and a delicate perfume. It made a lovely juice and it puréed well and quickly. Whole, it baked wonderfully well, although as it’s a small – but perfectly formed – apple, you might need two. When it came to the tarte Maman Blanc, the apple was simply exquisite, and incredibly it made one of the best tarte tatin*s* of all the cultivars we tested.

GROWING NOTES

Has the advantage of being self fertile, disease free, and the blossoms have some resistance to frost. The cultivar is also a compact grower. The apples stay on the tree when ripe and so don’t have to be picked at once, but when harvested in mid-to-late September the fruit can be stored until December.

BOOK DETAILS *The above is an extract from Raymond Blanc’s* The Lost Orchard: A French Chef Rediscovers a Great British Food Heritage*, which is published by Headline on 14 November, priced £20.*

As much attention is given to The Pig Hotel Group's kitchen gardens as the dishes served in the restaurants. There are six 'Pigs' in total, each with its own garden growing a huge variety of produce.

Food focus

In the third of our series on growing for flavour, we meet Ollie Hutson of The Pig Hotel Group, where the kitchen gardens lie at the heart of the operation

WORDS **ALYS HURN** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

Ollie Hutson selects a *Beta vulgaris* 'Cylindra' for the kitchen. As guardian of The Pig Hotel Group's kitchen gardens, he understands that different cultivars have different flavour profiles.

Senior kitchen gardener Ollie Hutson is the driving force behind the food-focused philosophy of The Pig Hotel Group. Describing its hotels as restaurants with rooms, the chain promises seasonal, British-grown produce sourced as locally as possible – ingredients come from within a 25-mile radius of each hotel, if not from its own garden.

The Pig doesn't claim to be self-sufficient, but tries to ensure that every plate is touched by the garden in some way. At the start of the season, Ollie gets together with the head gardeners of each property to discuss cultivars they've grown or would like to grow. Each crop is put in to three categories: more, less or not at all. Ollie is an advocate of growing different or unusual cultivars to monopolise on flavour, his philosophy is simply: "If you don't experiment, you never learn."

Trial and error is a big part of Ollie's approach. An experiment is under way to grow luffa to use as natural loofahs in the spa. They need to be grown until the flesh rots away, revealing the coarse skeleton beneath. Ollie has also found that by leaving cavolo nero in the ground until March, the flower shoots can be used as a tastier alternative to sprouting broccoli. Understanding the growing conditions of each plot by working with the land has been another of Ollie's key learnings. Blueberries grow well in the heavy clay soil at The Pig in the New Forest, but not in the sandy soil near Bath, where Chilean guavas (a relatively unknown fruit similar to a currant with a sweet, punchy flavour) thrive instead.

There is diversity across The Pig's gardens, and each has its own unique aspect. The orchard, for example, is one of the main attractions of The Pig near Bath. After three years of restoration, it now produces a mixture of interesting Victorian and 20th-century apple cultivars, including the cider apple 'Kingston Black', and dessert apples 'Cox's Orange Pippin' and 'Beauty of Bath'.

Although responsibility for the gardens starts and finishes with Ollie, he's keen to stress that the gardens don't belong to him: "I'm just the steward for a while, keeping them in a good state for the people who come after me and doing justice to the people who owned them before." ◻

Turn the page for Ollie's choice of 18 key edibles ▷

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18 KEY PLANTS FROM THE PIG

1 *Rosmarinus officinalis* ‘Green Ginger’ (rosemary) Ollie’s favourite rosemary. These upright plants have a strong aroma of both rosemary and ginger. It makes for a fantastic infusion with gin. 1m. AGM*.

2 *Allium sativum* ‘Early Purple Wight’ (garlic) This is a soft-neck cultivar producing relatively small purple-tinged bulbs that can be harvested as early as May. 30cm.

3 *Vicia faba* ‘Crimson Flowered’ (crimson-flowered broad bean) This cultivar of broad bean is probably best planted early in the new year. The bright-red flowers stand out better than their white cousins and make an interesting garnish. 90cm.

4 *Chenopodium giganteum* (tree spinach) A close relative of the weed known as fat hen, this spinach substitute has bright-green leaves that are covered in a bright, reddish-pink dust. When mature it can be wilted down and used like a true spinach or, when its leaves are very young, used raw as a garnish. 3m.

5 *Raphanus sativus* ‘München Bier’ (white radish) A variety of radish that has been bred for its seedpods rather than its root. When you bite into the pods you get a crunchy explosion of peppery, radish-like spice. 10cm.

6 *Beta vulgaris* subsp. *cicla* var. *flavescens* ‘Bright Lights’ (chard ‘Bright Lights’) Chard is basically a beetroot that has been bred for its leaves and stems rather than its roots. Ollie chooses to grow the Bright Lights mix as you get a great mix of different coloured stems that can be harvested throughout the winter and pickled to make a colourful garnish. 45cm.

7 *Brassica oleracea* ‘Redbor’ (curly kale) This curly kale cultivar produces large, purple-veined leaves that turn from dark green to deep purple as they mature and get exposed to colder temperatures. Kale is naturally high in many vitamins and minerals and this purple variety looks particularly striking when used raw in a smoothie. 60cm.

8 *Allium sativum* ‘Solent Wight’ (garlic) Another soft-neck cultivar, which is the original Isle of Wight garlic. It is particularly hardy and can be planted throughout the winter. Ollie often harvests this variety early as a green garlic. 60cm.

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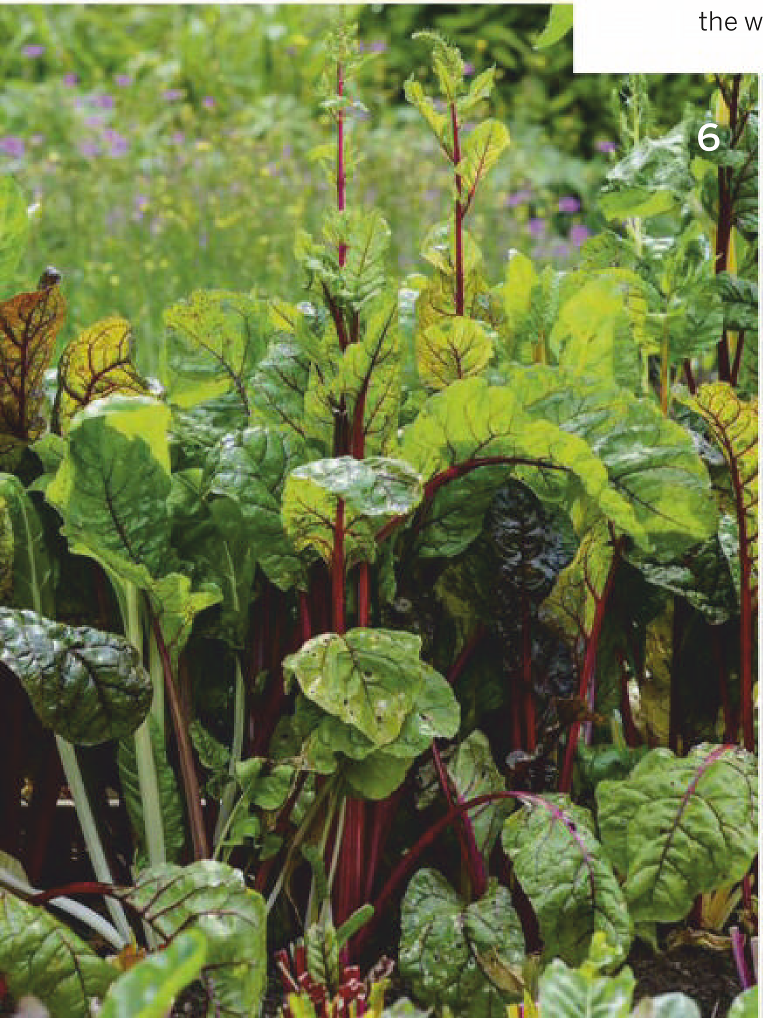
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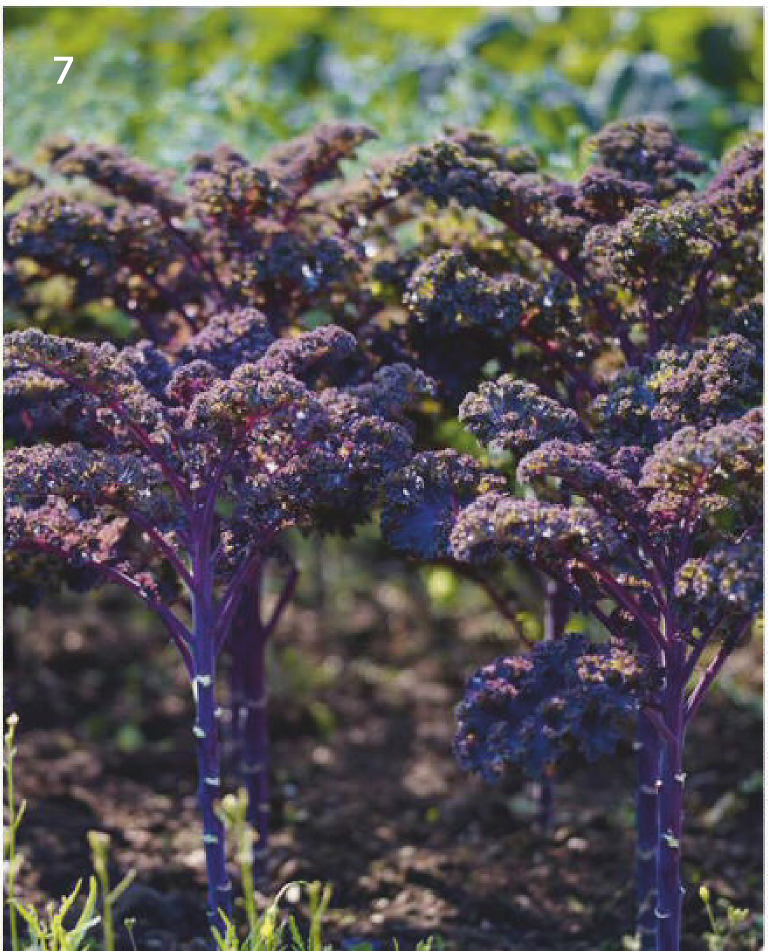
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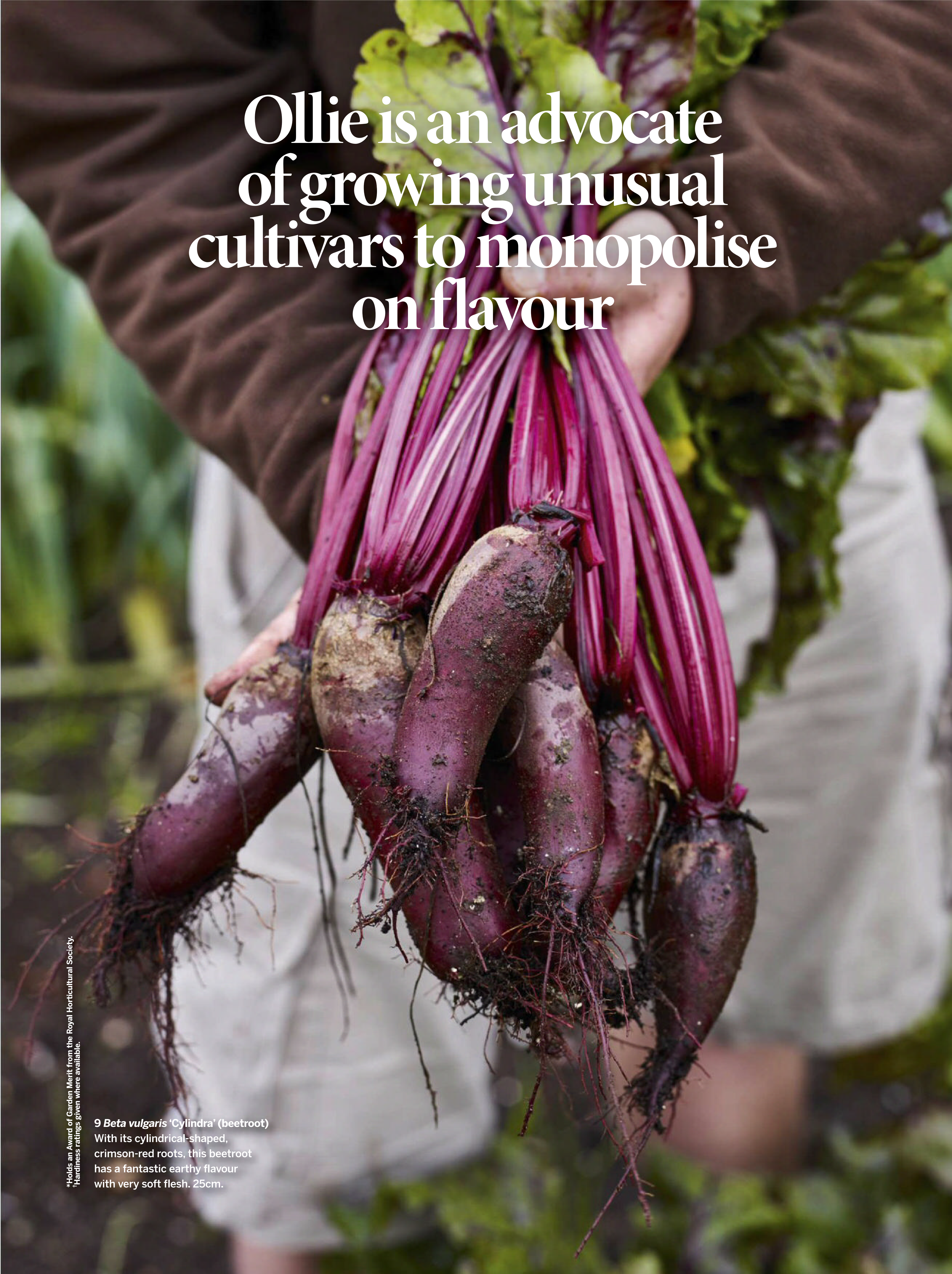

Ollie is an advocate of growing unusual cultivars to monopolise on flavour

9 *Beta vulgaris* 'Cylindra' (beetroot)
With its cylindrical-shaped, crimson-red roots, this beetroot has a fantastic earthy flavour with very soft flesh. 25cm.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

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18 KEY PLANTS CONTINUED

10 ***Brassica juncea*** **'Red Frills' (mustard)** These red- and green-tinged leaves have a mild mustardy heat and can add a nice variety of texture and leaf shape to winter salads. 15cm.

11 ***Ribes rubrum*** **'Versailles Blanche' (whitecurrant)** Produces large trusses of creamy yellow fruit that are practically transparent, these berries are particularly striking when set in summer jellies. 1.5m. RHS H6[†].

12 ***Borago officinalis*** **(borage)** A classic edible flower with a fresh-tasting flavour that is often associated with cucumber or oysters. It is sometimes frozen into ice cubes and used in summer cocktails. At The Pig it is used as a decorative garnish that works particularly well with fish dishes. 75cm. RHS H5.

13 ***Brassica juncea*** **'Osaka Purple' (Japanese giant red mustard)** Ollie's favourite mustard, which produces round leaves with a mild mustard-like spice contrasting well with the sweet, crunchy stems. Be careful though, the leaves have a tendency to grow too large – seemingly overnight. 30cm.

14 ***Cynara cardunculus*** **Scolymus Group (globe artichoke)** Similar to the rainbow chard, these beautiful plants are at home just as much in a decorative border as they are in the kitchen garden. At The Pig the garden team harvest the immature, yet large, flower buds from around July, first removing the apical bud to encourage the side shoots to form. 1m.

15 ***Solanum lycopersicum*** **'Sungold' (golden tomato)** Ollie trains tomatoes as cordons as he has limited protected space for tomatoes. He grows 'Sungold' every year as its orangey-yellow, cherry-sized fruit have an amazing balance of both texture and flavour, particularly early in the season. 1.5m. AGM.

16 ***Cucurbita pepo*** **'Ambassador' (courgette)** Although you can grow this cultivar to produce long, uniform, dark-green fruit, the chefs at The Pig prefer the garden team to harvest the flowers for them to tempura. The best flowers are the female ones that grow on the end of the small baby courgettes. 60cm.

17 ***Brassica oleracea*** **'Nero di Toscana' (cavolo nero kale)** Cavolo nero has fast become the trendiest kale on the market, the leaves can be harvested from summer to spring. Ollie's favourite way to use it is to wait for the plants to bolt from March onwards and harvest as a sprouting broccoli with a sweet, nutty texture. 75cm.

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18 ***Cucurbita maxima*** **'Red Kuri' (squash)**
The early maturing cultivar is almost as valuable as an ornamental as it is tasty. The skin is bright orange and the flesh is yellow. Ideally this variety should be cured for one to two months. 60cm.

Understanding the growing conditions of each plot has been key to Ollie's learning

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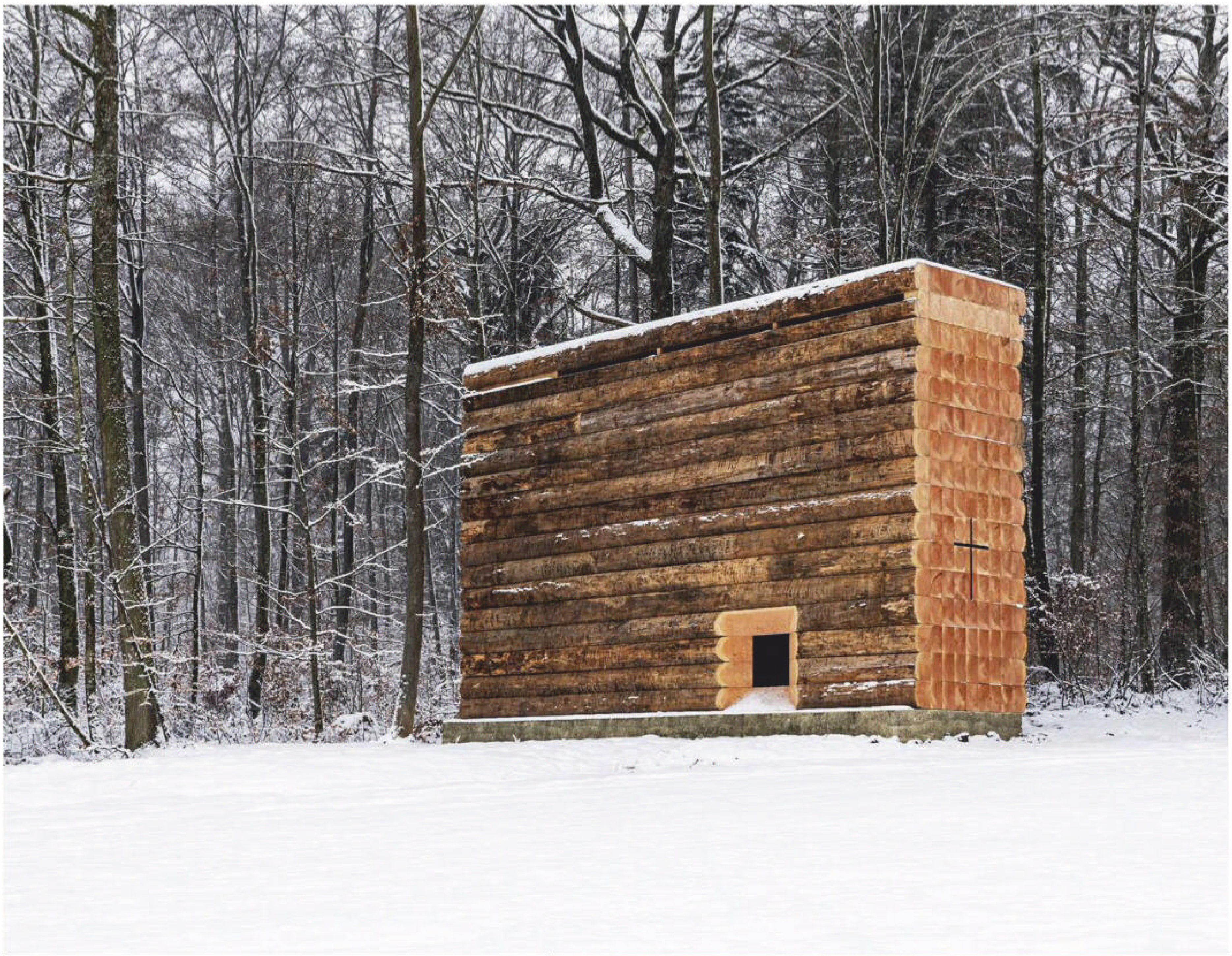
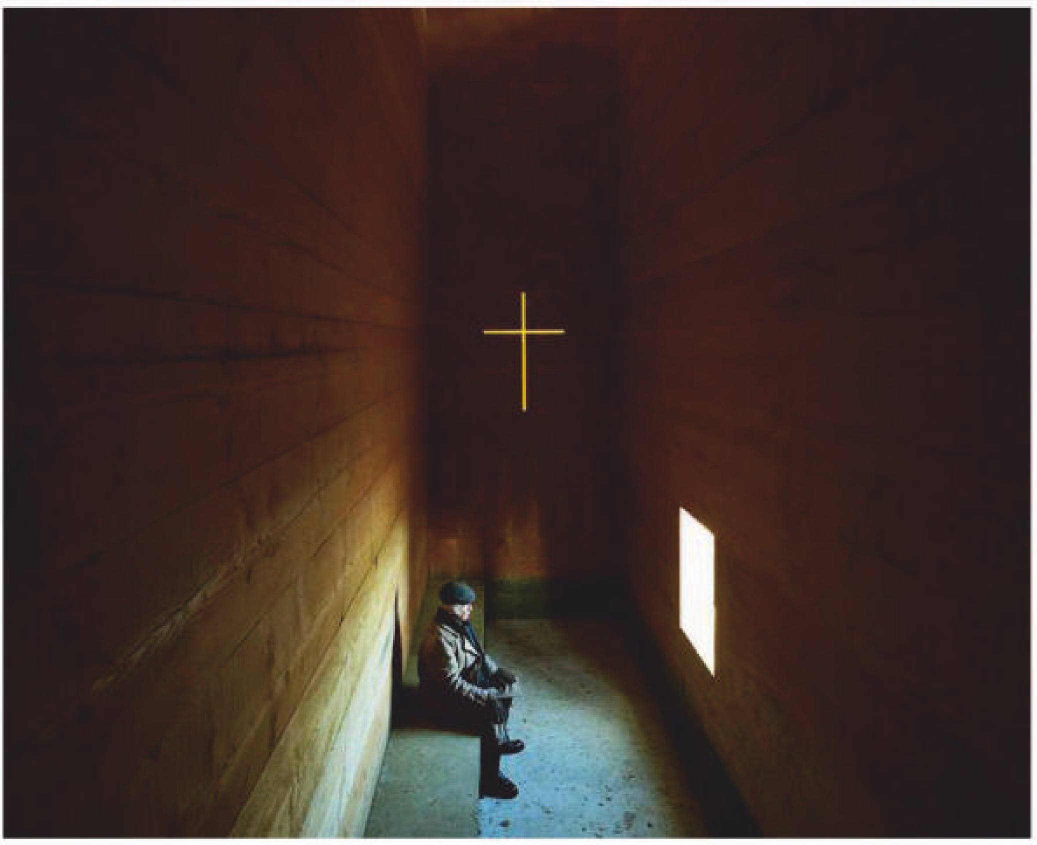
Design

News, ideas and sourcebook



RESTING SPACE

Wooden Chapel by architect John Pawson is one of seven new rest stops along a cycling path through the Bavarian Forest. The brief was to create a space for quiet contemplation as well as a sanctuary from the elements, primarily using timber for its construction. Pawson chose trunks of Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), opting to keep the timber as close as possible to its natural state, and stacked 144 trunks, 7m high so that they look like a pile of logs stacked up to dry. A square opening in one wall frames the view of the landscape, which includes a church spire, while to its side a simple cross has been carved into the wall and filled with coloured glass. **johnpawson.com**



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News

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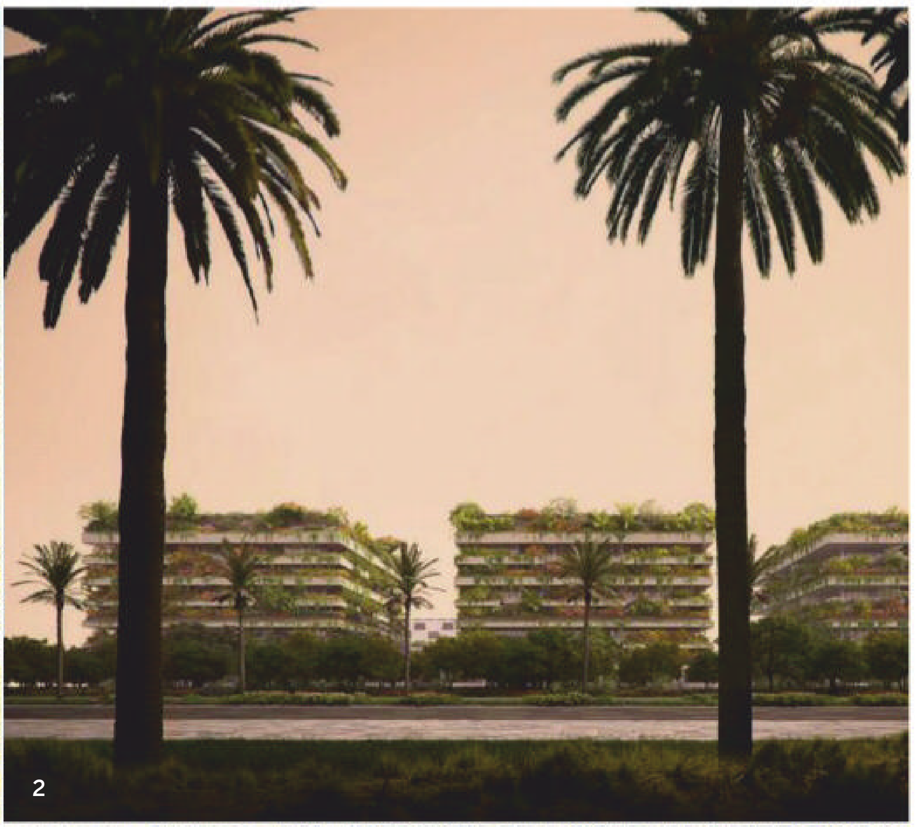
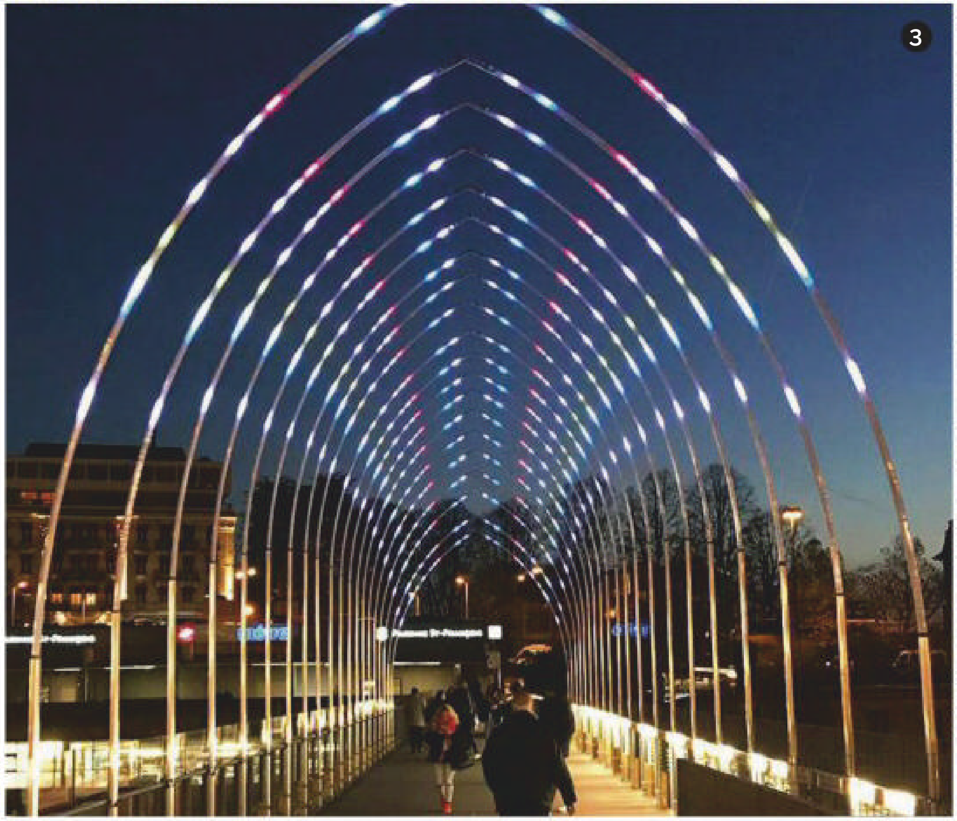




① BALI AWARDS 2019

Aralia Garden Design was joint winner of the Design Excellence Award for projects over £100K at this year's BALI awards. Its winning project in Hertfordshire uses Corten steel elements and natural stone to link three spaces, including a driveway garden, a contemporary courtyard, and the original walled garden (shown), which features naturalistic planting, a wildflower meadow and a natural swimming pond. It shared the prize with designer Rosemary Coldstream for a garden in Hampstead that uses pleached trees to create symmetrical tree heights on either side of a two-and-half-acre private garden. **baliawards.co.uk**

② VERTICAL FORESTS

An initiative to create a greener Cairo includes the construction of three cube-shaped buildings clad in plants. The buildings, designed by Stefano Boeri Architetti with local partner Shimaa Shalash and landscape designer Laura Gatti, will be similar to the towers of Milan's Bosco Verticale (also designed by Boeri and Gatti) and will be 30m high and wide. Each one can accommodate 350 trees, more than 14,000 shrubs and feature 100 different species of plants. It's estimated that this vertical forest – Africa's first – will absorb around seven tons of carbon dioxide and produce eight tons of oxygen a year. **stefanoboeriarchitetti.net**

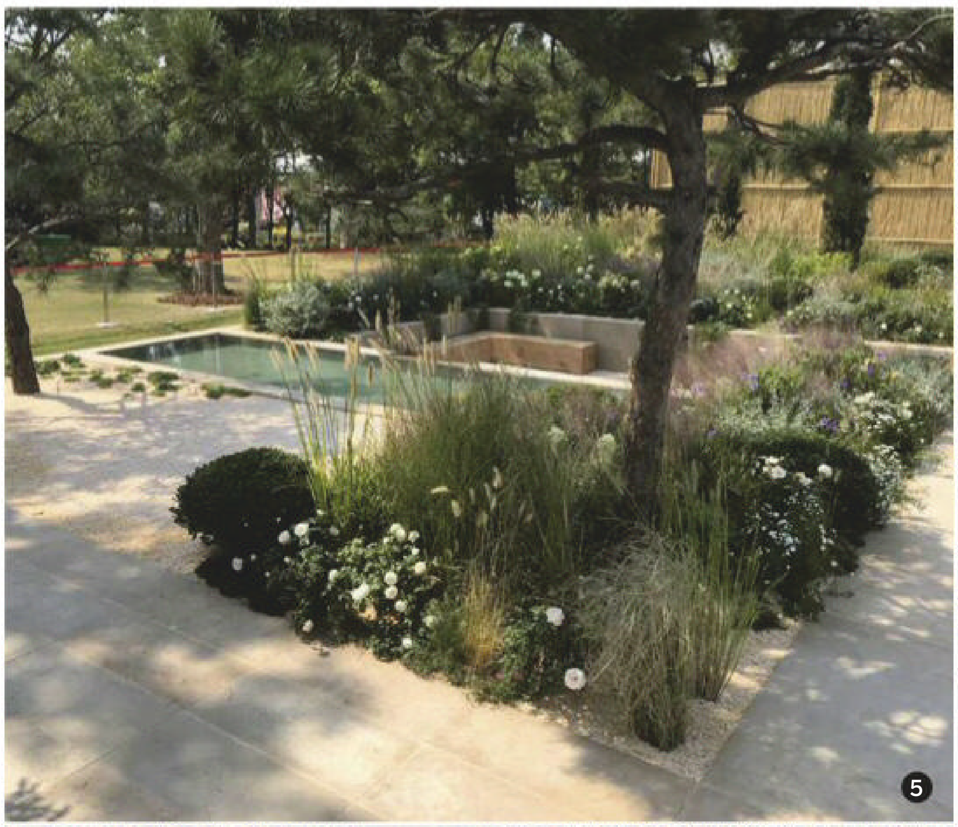
③ TUNNEL OF LIGHT

Bifröst, a light installation created by French designers David Lesort and Arnaud Giroud of Studio Pitaya will form part of the Christmas illuminations at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. In Norse mythology, Bifröst was a burning rainbow bridge that reached between the realms of the living and the gods. At Kew it will be a tunnel made up of 20 arches of LED lights across Camellia Walk that will create three colour waves. Set near the beginning of the light trail, the tunnel will guide visitors to other illuminations, which include a waterfall of lights designed by Brighton-based studio ITHACA, on Kew's Treetop Walk. **pitaya.fr**

④ SGD AWARDS

Among the finalists announced for the SGD Awards 2020 are restored formal gardens in Co Limerick, Ireland, designed by Edward Freeman, a cliff garden in Bermuda by Andy Sturgeon, and a modern meadow garden in Kent (shown) by Mandy Buckland. In total 23 projects have been shortlisted, across 13 categories, including the new Beth Chatto Award for gardens that show creative, ecological use of materials, and planting that maximises sustainability, creating places for pollinators and wildlife. The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in London on 3 January 2020. **sgd.org.uk**

1 RICHARD BLOOM; 2 STEFANO BOERI ARCHITETTI; 3 PITAYA 2017 - 207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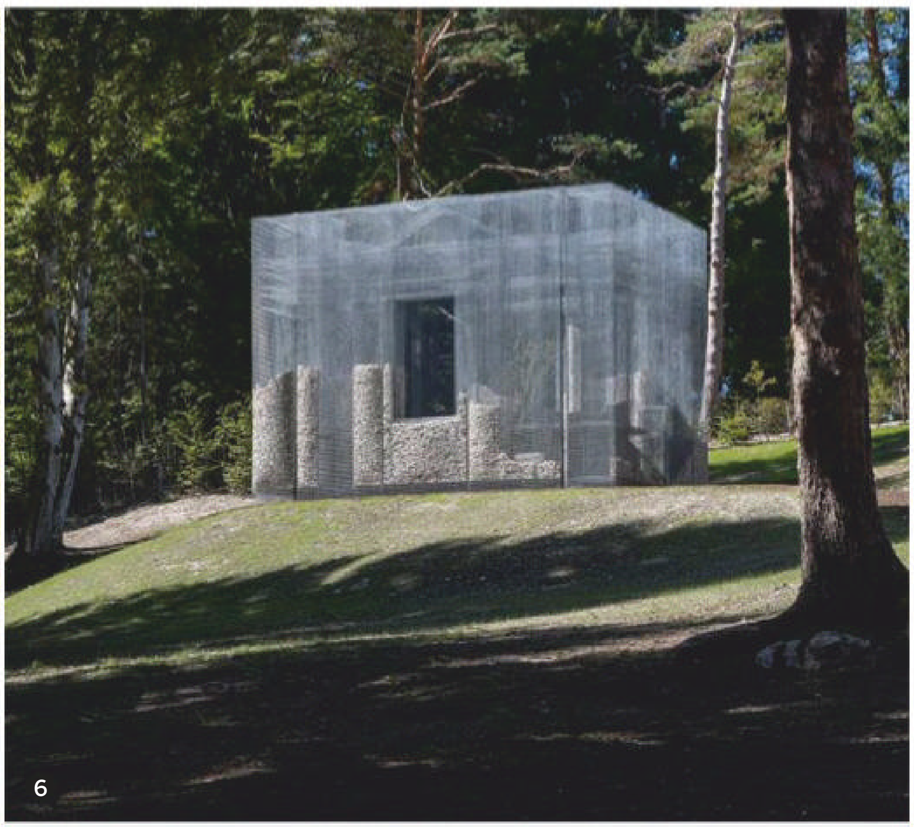
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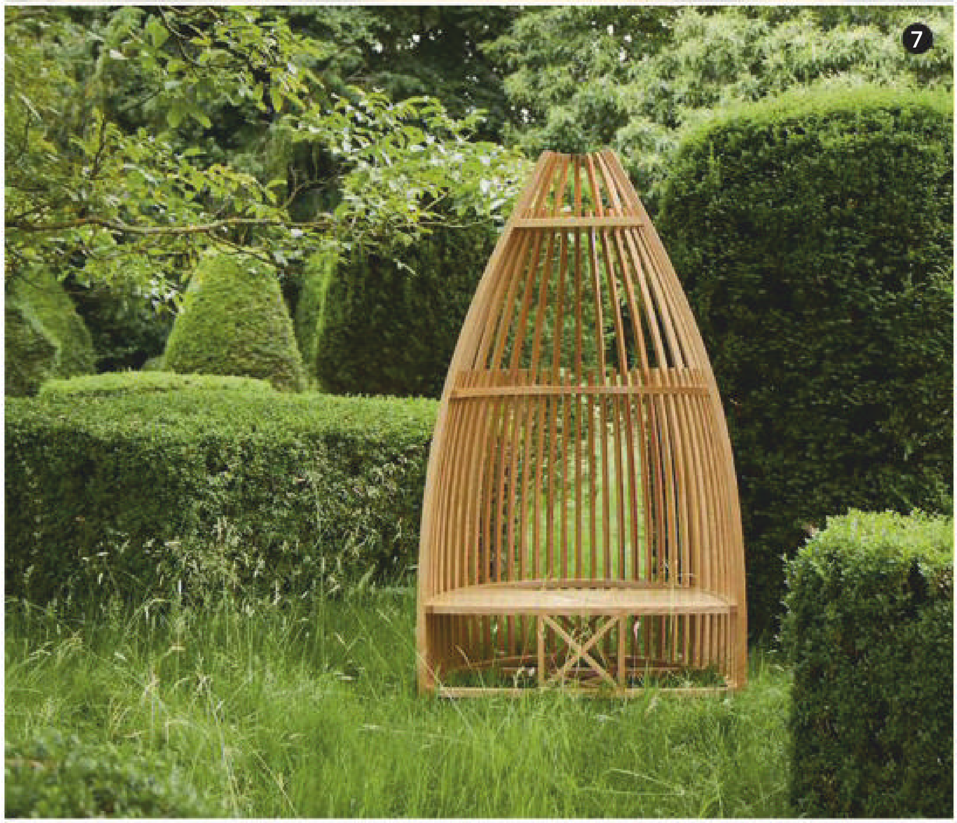
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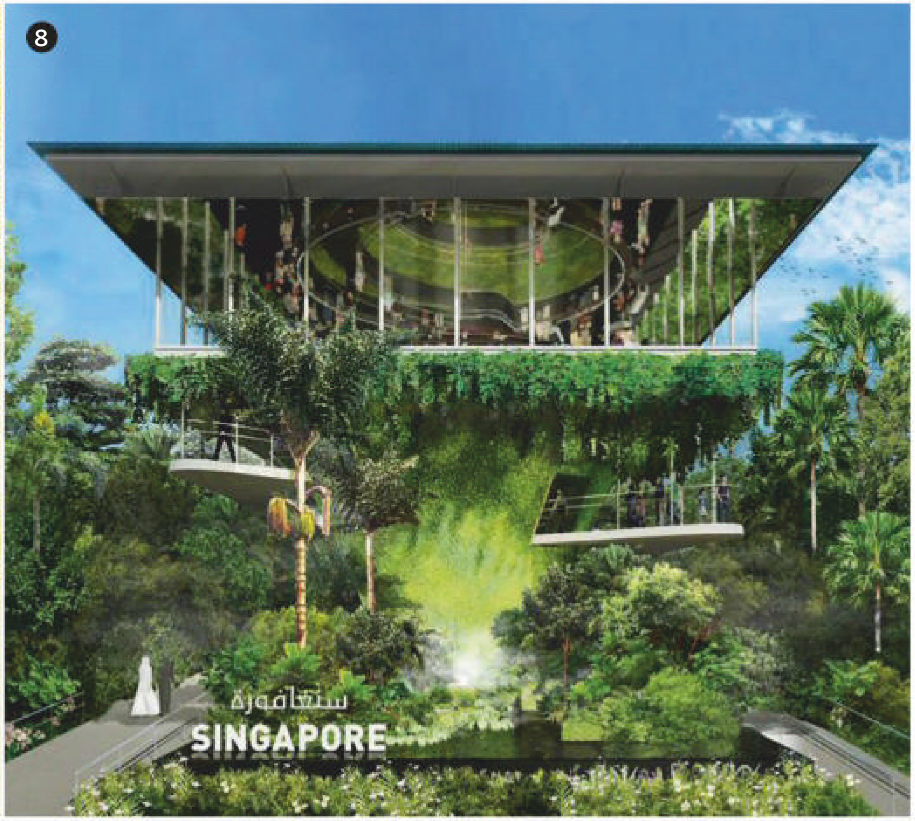
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⑤ NEW GARDEN SHOW

James Basson, Inch Lim, Alistair Baldwin and Matt Keightley were among the leading international designers who created show gardens at China's new Wuhan World Flower Show, in October. The 10m x 20m gardens were inspired by different plant regions of the world and will be permanent additions to the park where the show takes place. Matt Keightley's design (shown) was an imagined courtyard space in which a stone-edged pool was framed by layered planting that featured tall, stone pines among beds of grasses and perennials in shades of white and purple.

⑥ RUIN INSTALLATION

Italian sculptor Edoardo Tresoldi, has created a new site-specific artwork for Arte Sella, an open-air museum in Italy's Trentino valley. *Simbiosi* (Italian for symbiosis) is an imaginative reconstruction of an existing ruin that uses wire mesh to form the outline of the structure. The 5m-high mesh extension of the re-shaped stone base creates a new kind of ruin that, thanks to its transparency, sits lightly on the land while also providing an intimate space for contemplation and rest. The open-air gallery reopened in the spring after a storm in 2018 destroyed much of the park. **artesella.it/en**

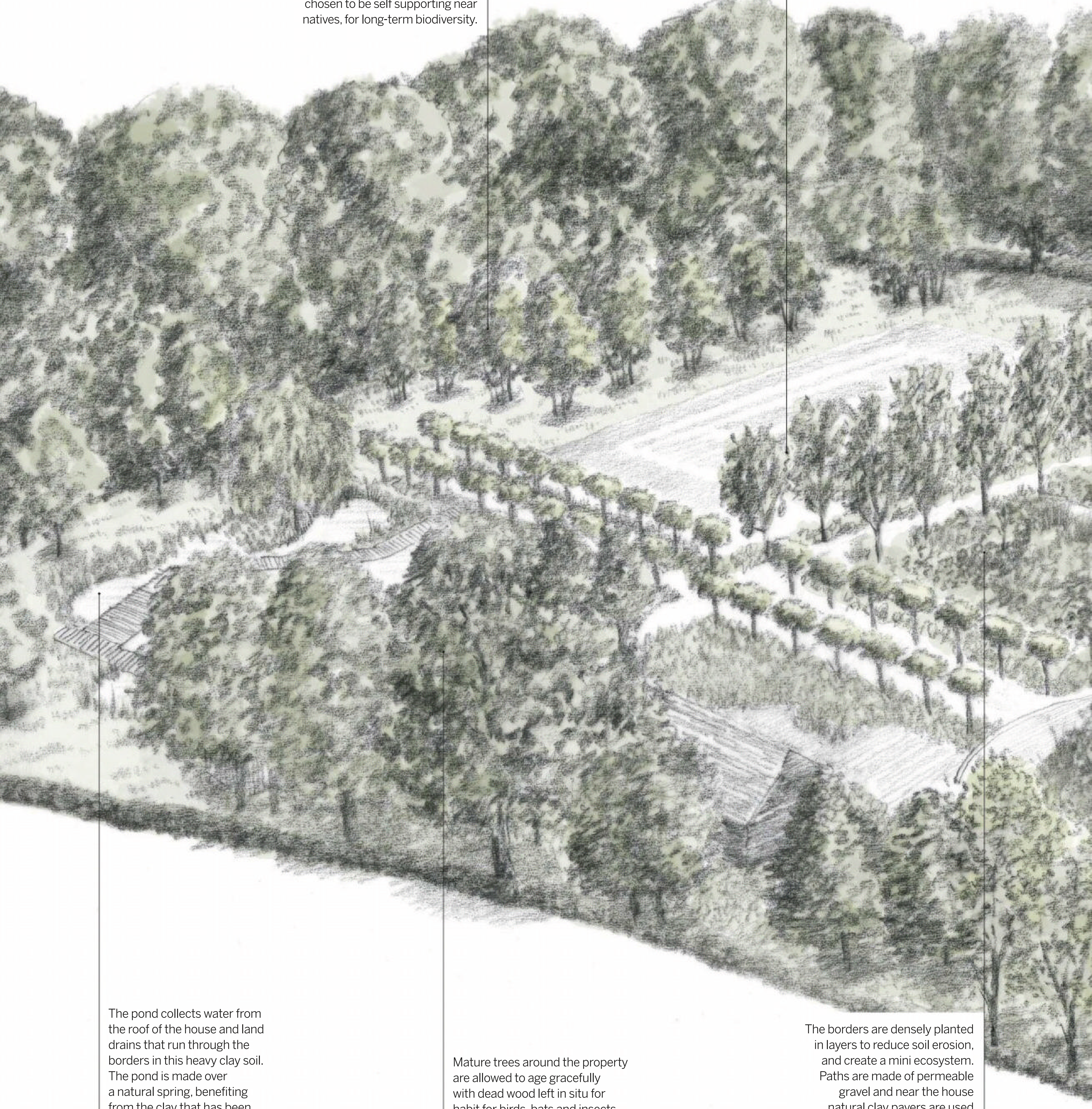
⑦ LEGACY CHAIR

As part of the London Design Festival's Legacy project, the leaders of some of London's cultural institutions were invited to collaborate with designers to create a legacy piece of personal or professional relevance to them. One of the most striking pieces was this chair, designed by Tomoko Azumi of tna design studio for Kwame Kwei-Armah, artistic director of London's Young Vic Theatre. The shape of the chair was inspired by the slave ships that carried Kwei-Armah's ancestors out of Africa. Like each of the ten pieces, it was crafted in American red oak, a sustainable hardwood species. **londondesignfestival.com**

⑧ WOHA PAVILION

The design for Singapore's pavilion for Expo 2020 in Dubai demonstrates the potential of plants to soften architecture and alleviate the effects of climate change. Designed by Singapore-based WOHA, the pavilion will be a net-zero energy building for the six months of the world expo exhibition thanks to solar energy and desalination systems. The ground floor will be lushly planted with tropical trees, shrubs and orchids. Three cone-shaped masses, clad in greenery, will soar up to the upper levels, which will be reached by a canopy walk. The air will be cooled by evapo-transpiration of the plants and fans that deliver a fine mist. **woha.net**

6 ROBERTO CONTE; 7 PETR KREJCI; 8 SINGAPORE PAVILION, EXPO 2020 DUBAI



Hazelnut coppice with wildflowers beneath provides a transition to the woodland and a renewable mid-storey. All the new trees sequester carbon as they grow and provide habitat and forage, while the lower planting layers are chosen to be self supporting near natives, for long-term biodiversity.

Tree-lined paths create walkways and vistas to make the most of the views and the path of the sun. The trees feed the birds and bees and provide shelter, reducing the heat below in summer.

The pond collects water from the roof of the house and land drains that run through the borders in this heavy clay soil. The pond is made over a natural spring, benefiting from the clay that has been puddled to make it water tight.

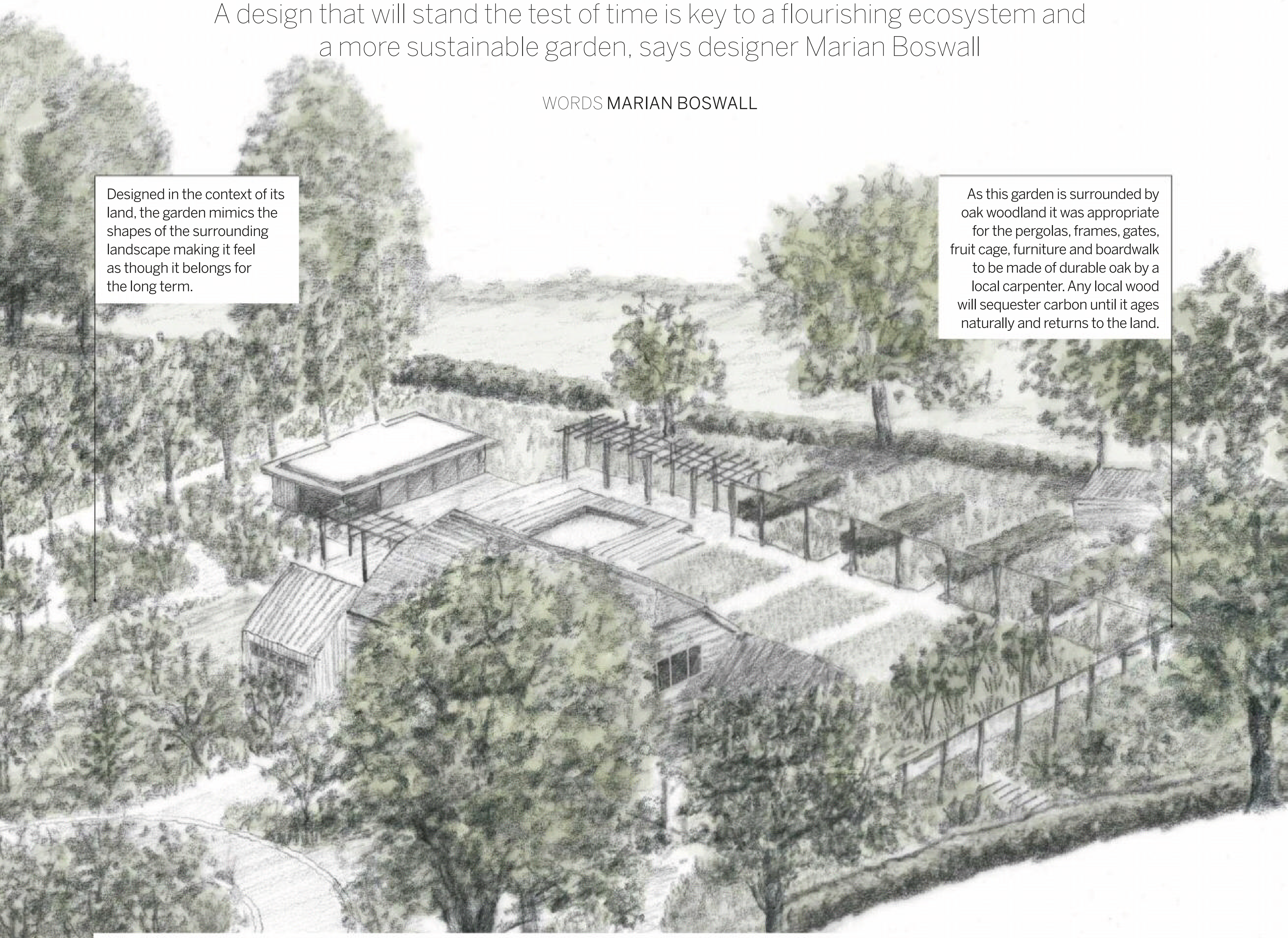
Mature trees around the property are allowed to age gracefully with dead wood left in situ for habit for birds, bats and insects wherever practical.

The borders are densely planted in layers to reduce soil erosion, and create a mini ecosystem. Paths are made of permeable gravel and near the house natural clay pavers are used with sandstone edging.

Creating a garden to endure

A design that will stand the test of time is key to a flourishing ecosystem and a more sustainable garden, says designer Marian Boswall

WORDS MARIAN BOSWALL



Designed in the context of its land, the garden mimics the shapes of the surrounding landscape making it feel as though it belongs for the long term.

As this garden is surrounded by oak woodland it was appropriate for the pergolas, frames, gates, fruit cage, furniture and boardwalk to be made of durable oak by a local carpenter. Any local wood will sequester carbon until it ages naturally and returns to the land.

SOPHIE POLLOCK FOR MBLA

Why do some gardens last for hundreds of years and become a treasured part of the landscape, while others are soon ripped out and redesigned? Town and city gardens especially seem to fall foul of changes in fashion, but stability is vital to creating a flourishing ecosystem as well as reducing our waste and impact. So how can we ensure that the gardens we inherit or create will stand the test of time?

Sustainability was not a buzz word in Ancient Rome when the architect Vitruvius wrote his seminal design manual *De Architectura* (On Architecture). His ideas have deeply influenced British design, largely through the work of the Scottish architect Colen Campbell, who published his own great work *Vitruvius Britannicus* in three volumes between 1715 and 1725. These principles are still universally relevant today when designing buildings and gardens to endure. Vitruvius had advocated three tenets: *firmitas*, *utilitas* and *venustas*, which translate as strength, utility and beauty, ideas that reach across the centuries to the famous dictate of the 19th-century polymath William Morris that you should 'have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful'. Even today when we look to design our own gardens all of these tenets hold true.

To be durable and robust a garden must fit with the land, be of the land and eventually be able to return to the land. This means a design that works with the site aesthetically and practically, and using well-crafted, carefully chosen materials and solid construction methods. By observing the land we can see where the wind comes from, where shade is cast and privacy needed and so where trees, hedges and long-term structures will be best sited. On land with a sandstone geology and a clay soil, for example, it makes sense to use sandstone pavers and clay brick so that one day when we are long gone the materials can meld back into the land. We can also watch where water runs ▷

When a garden is delightful you can sense the love and thought that has gone into it, this is what makes us fall in love with a place and want to nurture a garden

▷ and where it pools, to see where drainage is needed and where we can collect water to reuse. By planting trees and using wood to construct paths and structures we can lock up carbon. By using local natural materials, which are often reclaimed and can be reused whenever possible, we avoid waste and ensure we are following the principle of do no harm to the land long term.

To be useful, a garden must work practically, so access and circulation should make sense, pathways should go where there is a desire line to walk frequently and to keep feet dry in wet weather – and shelter, seats and low-impact utilities should be sourced and placed just where they are needed. By choosing plants that flourish in the conditions and that fix nitrogen or provide food and forage or deter the uninvited, nothing is wasted. By planting densely and in harmonious layers we again lock up carbon, reduce pests and disease and create a self-supporting ecosystem to endure. Adding organic matter and avoiding artificial fertilisers and pesticides will make sure the soil is healthy and that it contains all the beneficial bacteria and fungi plants need to get their nutrients from the soil – a bit like giving it a healthy gut.

Earthly delights

When a garden is delightful you can sense the love and thought that has gone into it. From the scents that greet you to the colours and textures and placing of things 'just so', this is what makes us fall in love with a place, buy a house and want to continue to nurture a garden. Harmonious planting and use of light are key to this esoteric essence of a place. Since before Hadrian built his villa in Tivoli, using Vitruvius's principles, in the second century AD, we have aligned our buildings and gardens to the path of the sun, and the once glimpsed magic of a backlit border or bank of roses at sunrise is reminder enough to place key plants where they will get the spotlight.

When deciding what style to make a garden it is wise to look to the style of house we have chosen but also our own inner sense of paradise, which will fulfil us beyond any fleeting trend. Contemporary or traditional in taste, timeless elegance never goes out of fashion, and if we visit the gardens of Repton, Harold Peto's Iford, or Norah Lindsay's Blickling Hall, for example, we can see how good design intention stands the test of time. And finally we can celebrate ageing without throwing things away. The Japanese celebrate imperfection and transience in the philosophy of *wabi-sabi* whereby form evolves, natural materials take on the gradual patina of age, and old trees are venerated for their mature shape and beauty.

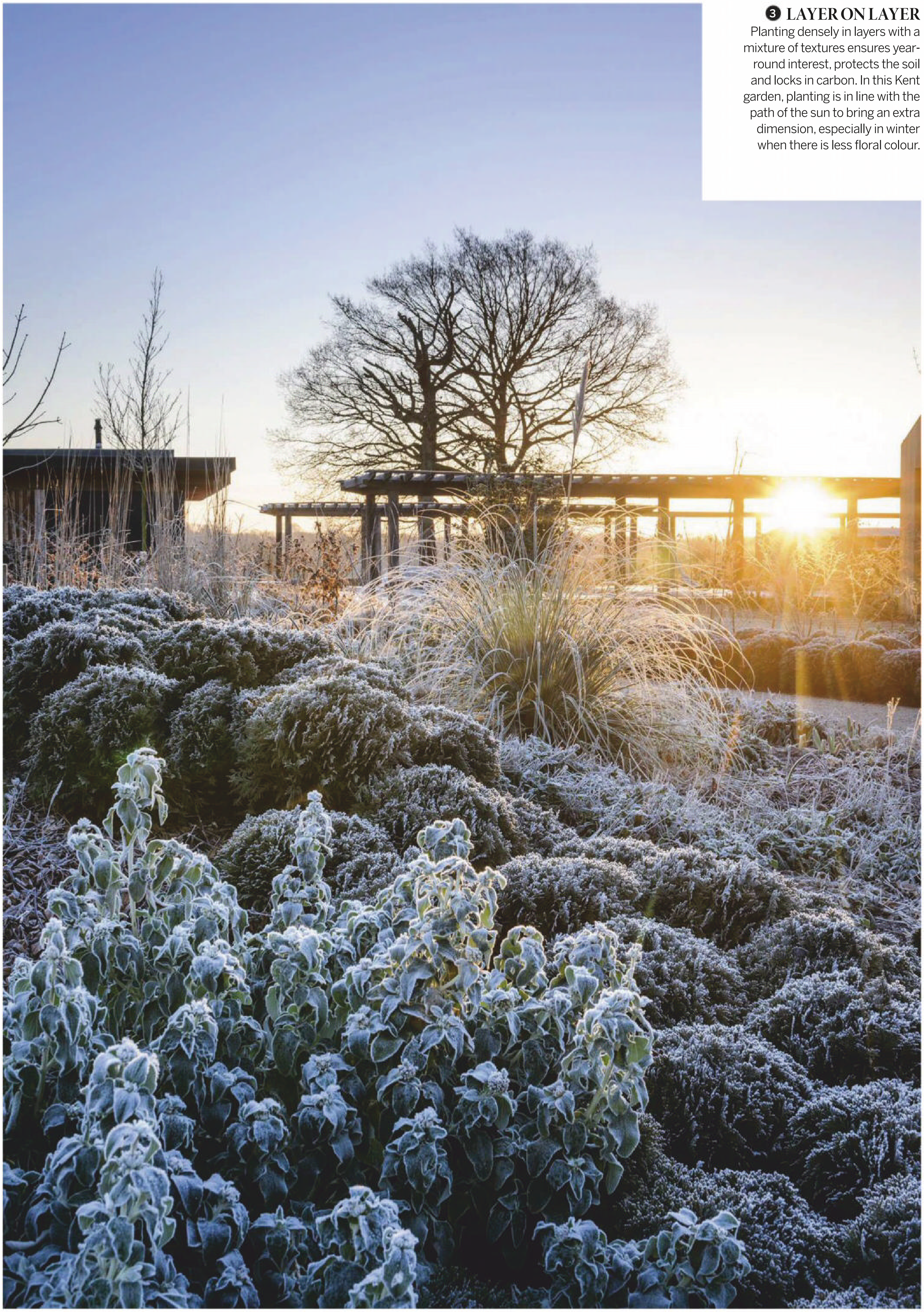
A garden is a labour of love that embodies so much about how we care for ourselves and the planet. Our aim in creating a garden to endure is to ensure reciprocity: for the garden to be delightful, useful and do no harm, so that when we leave the land we will have put back more than we have taken out. □

Marian Boswall is a multi-award-winning landscape architect with an international practice, MBLA, based in Kent. marianboswall.com

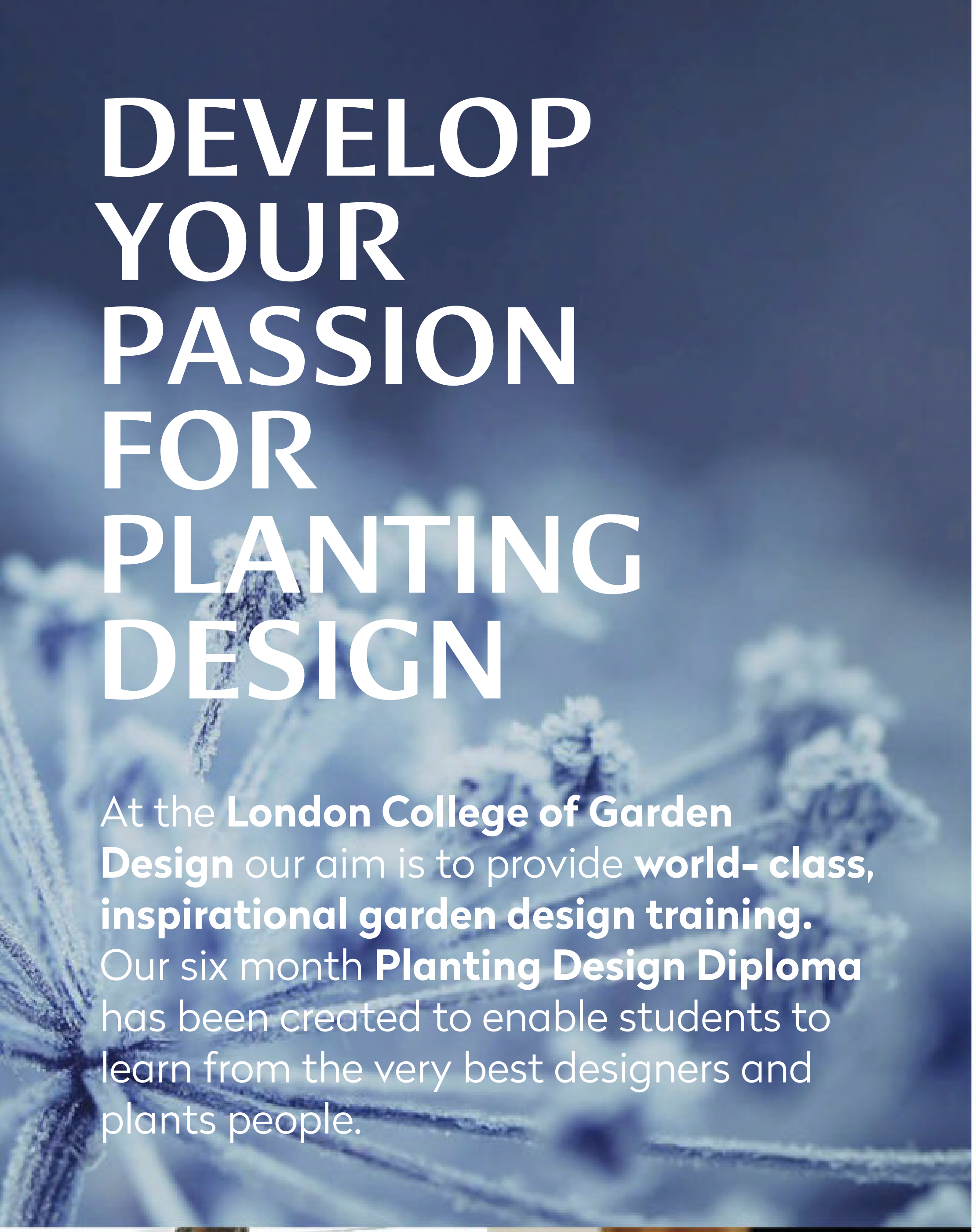
① CLASSICAL LINES
Good design often looks back to earlier eras for inspiration. Here classical stone pillars and York stone paving at Mapperton in Dorset are used in an Arts and Crafts context, looking beautiful with moss slowly softening them over a period of many years.

② AGE OLD
Using reclaimed and reusable natural materials avoids waste and follows the principle of do no harm. Here at The Pant in Monmouthshire, dry-stone walling and mature trees are allowed to acquire the graceful shapes and patina of age – what the Japanese call *wabi-sabi*.

PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



❸ LAYER ON LAYER
Planting densely in layers with a mixture of textures ensures year-round interest, protects the soil and locks in carbon. In this Kent garden, planting is in line with the path of the sun to bring an extra dimension, especially in winter when there is less floral colour.



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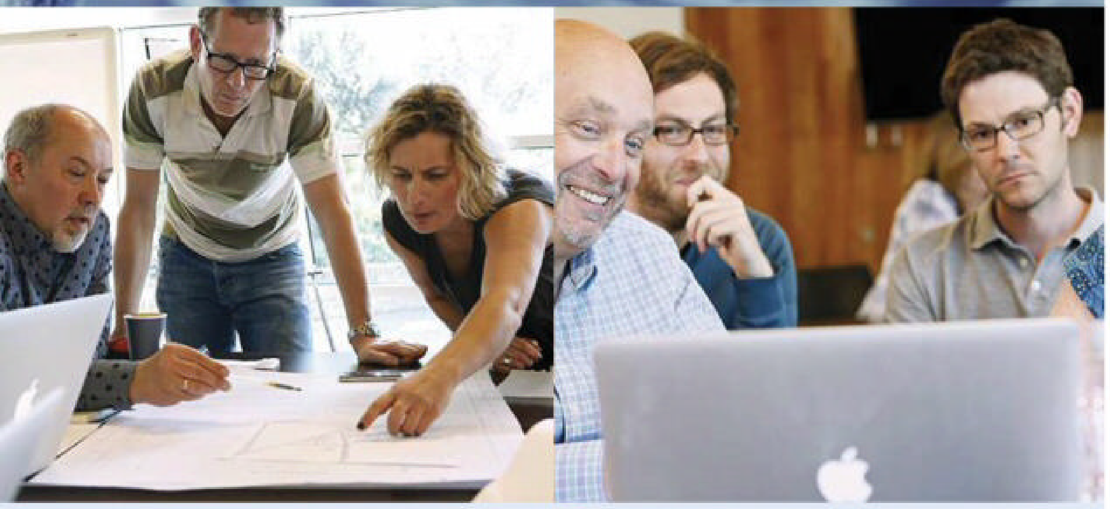

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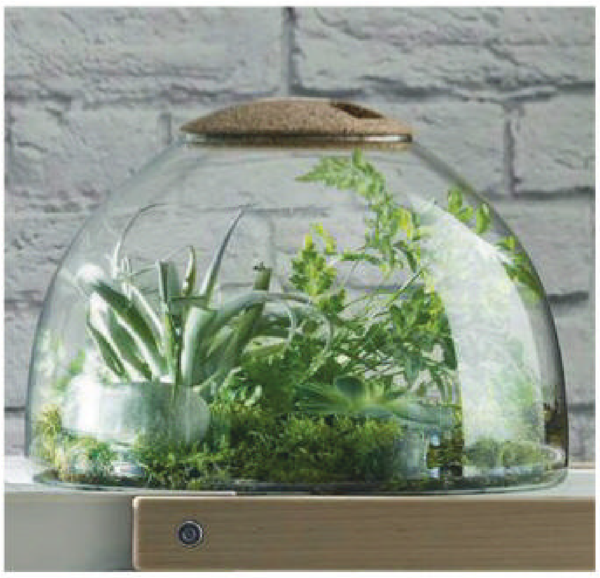
SOURCEBOOK

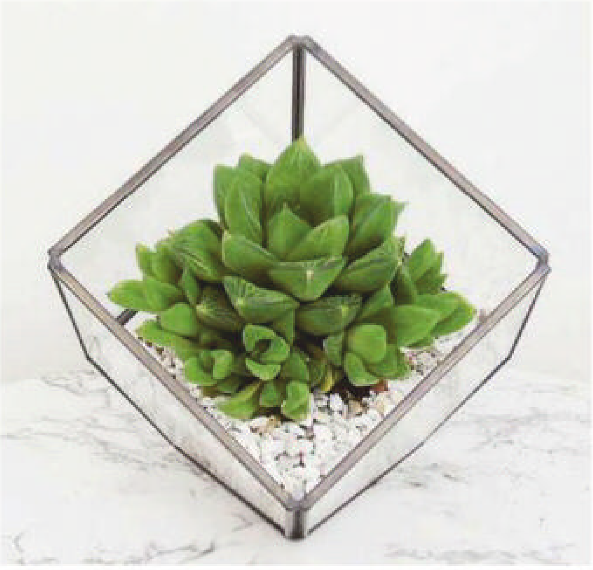
Terrariums

Bring some green indoors with our choice of nine stylish terrariums

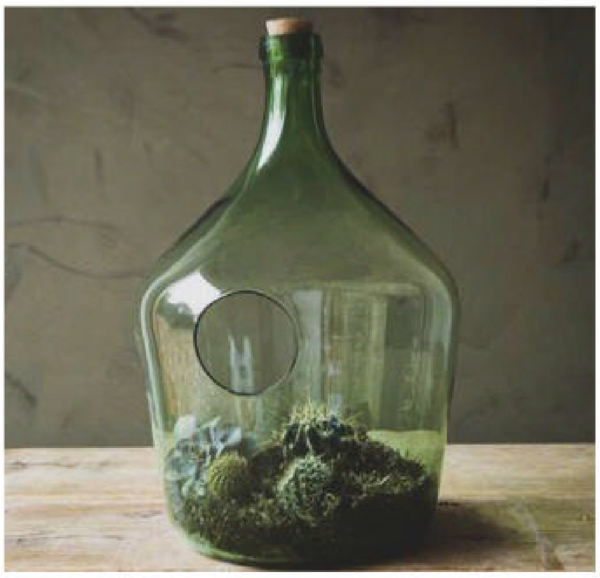
COMPILED BY NIKI GOSS



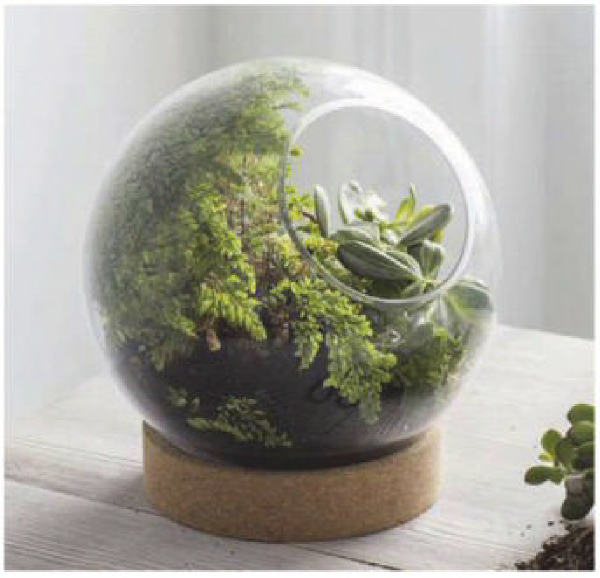
GLASS ACT
Canopy Closed Garden,
£65, LSA,
01932 789721, lsa-international.com



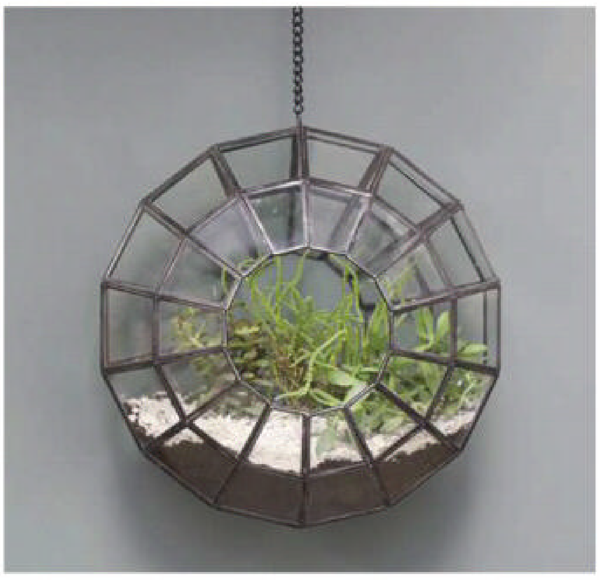
BOXING CLEVER
Glass Cube Terrarium,
£24.50, The Den & Now,
01244 911890, thedenandnow.co.uk



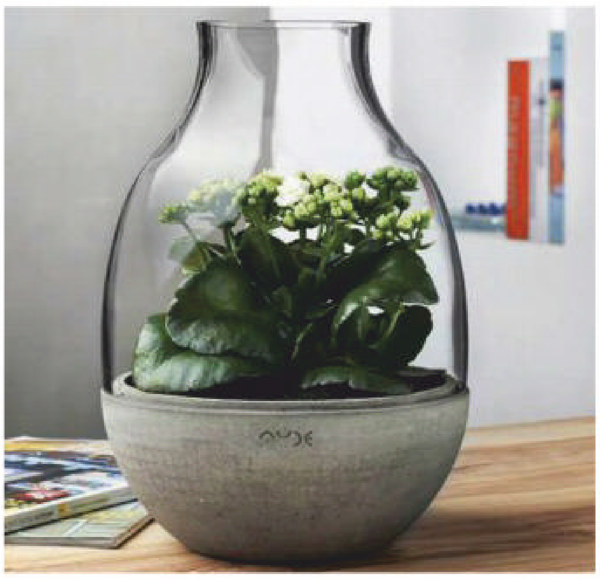
ELEGANT LINES
Open Bottle Terrarium, large,
£47.95, Graham & Green,
01225 418200, grahamandgreen.co.uk



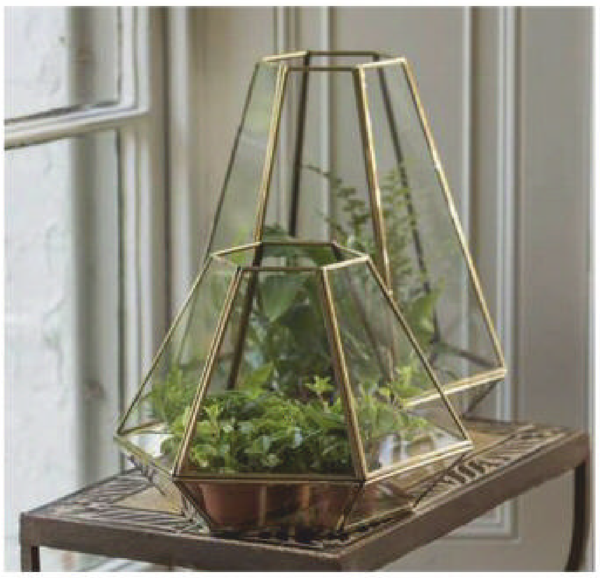
ROUND WORLD
Glass Globe Terrarium with cork base,
£25, Forest,
020 8691 5888, forest.london



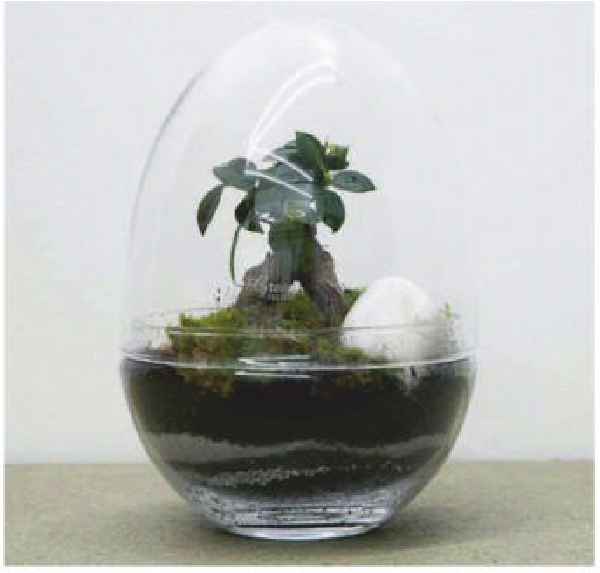
ON THE WALL
Pori Hanging Planter, large,
£99.95, Nkuku,
0333 240 0155, nkuku.com



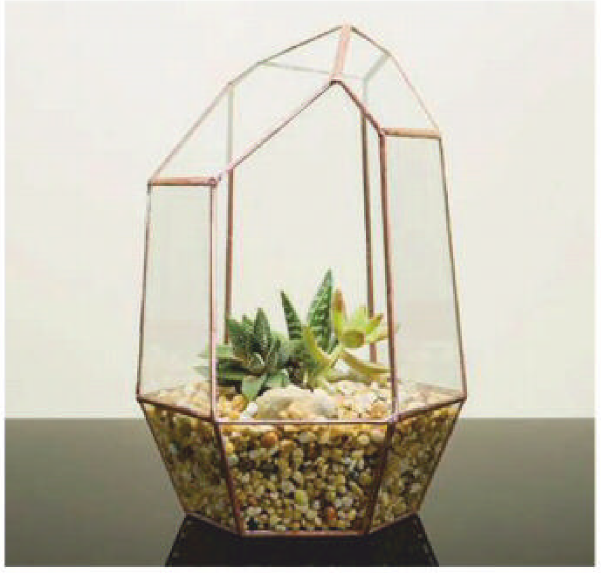
SOLID BASE
Eden Mini Terrarium with Moulded Concrete Base,
€71, Nude,
eu.nudeglass.com



TRADITIONAL STYLE
Terrarium with Brass Base Tray, low (front),
£37.99, Crocus,
01344 578111, crocus.co.uk



EGG SHAPE
Jurassic Lab Ficus Terrarium Large,
£65 (planted), Green Factory,
0116 269 1083, conranshop.co.uk

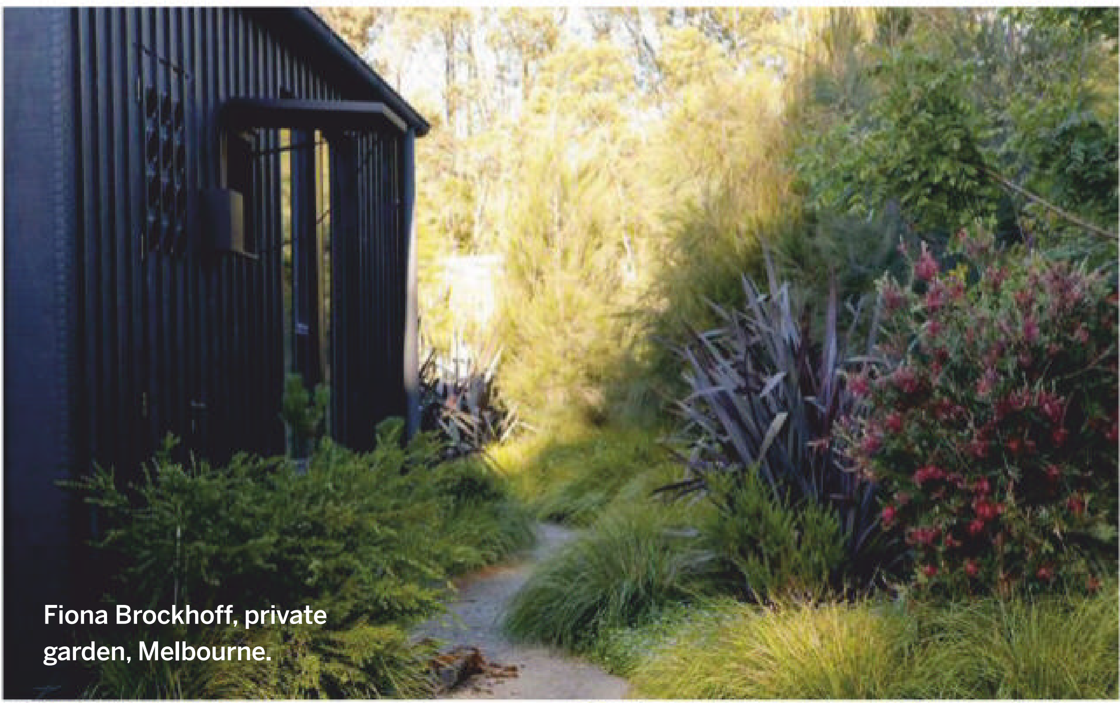


CITY SLEEK
Copper Gem Terrarium,
£44.95, The Urban Botanist,
0800 783 3375, theurbanbotanist.co.uk

CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

The full conference programme takes place 27-30 March, with talks from international speakers on the Saturday and Sunday. Additional activities, open to conference delegates only (at extra cost), include:

- Friday: **a tour of influential gardens in Melbourne's suburbs**, along with the opportunity to visit the **Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show** and view the 25th anniversary celebratory show gardens.
- Saturday evening: join a **picnic on the lawn** in the **Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne**, including a **tour of the new Fern Gully** meditation spaces, guided by designer Andrew Laidlaw.
- Following the conference there is a **programme of workshops** led by Australian and international speakers on a range of horticultural and landscape topics, such as planting design and water management.



Fiona Brockhoff, private garden, Melbourne.

Claudia West, public landscaping and planting, USA.

James Hitchmough, New Silk Road Garden, Beijing 2019 International Horticulture Expo.

27-30 MARCH 2020 MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE CONFERENCE

Sustainability and the management of limited resources in landscape design

Since it began in 2002 the biennial Australian Landscape Conference has operated at the cutting edge of international landscape and garden design. Perhaps the most important word is 'international', because very few conferences worldwide have consistently presented such a genuinely global digest of contemporary work and thought. The conference consistently strives to seek out the most interesting work in every continent and culture, taking the audience out of what may be described as the 'comfort zone' of gardens made in the Anglo-sphere.

The conference coincides with the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show, this year celebrating its 25th anniversary with a showcase of the best in design with show gardens from the previous Best in Show winners. A joint visit to the conference and flower show makes this a fantastic opportunity to learn more about the present and future of garden design in a changing world.

Full details of the conference and all events can be found at **landscapeconference.com** or email **info@landscapeconference.com**

FIONA BROCKHOFF IMAGE BY VIRGINIA CUMMINS; CLAUDIA WEST IMAGE BY ROB CARDILLO; ULF NORDFJELL IMAGE BY JASON INGRAM

LANDSCAPE & GARDEN EVENT *SUPPORTED BY* GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

Ulf Nordfjell, private garden, Sweden.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Claudia West (USA) Originally from Germany, Claudia now lives in the USA and is a passionate about US native plants. She is a lively and vital voice in ecological planting design, harnessing biodiverse plant systems to create resilient, emotionally resonant landscapes that are functional, beautiful and diverse.

Ulf Nordfjell (Sweden) An award-winning contemporary landscape architect and biologist, who works with city development in various climate zones and private gardens in Sweden and southern France.

Ross Palmer (New Zealand) A native New Zealander, formerly based in Phuket and now working internationally, whose designs are exciting, unpredictable, eclectic and use a pared-down plant range.

Midori Shintani (Japan) Head gardener at Hokkaido's huge Tokachi Millennium Forest, where she worked with Dan Pearson. Her passion for the forest is deeply rooted in Japanese animistic and spiritual bases, which reinforce the beautiful and sacred nature of the plants and landscapes.

Tim Richardson (UK) A writer, poet, historian and critic specialising in gardens and art. Recognised internationally as a leading authority on landscape design and history, his reflections are surprising, arresting and entertaining.

Paul Bangay (Australia) Paul's timeless, elegant, formal gardens are legendary. But his artistic flair continues to emerge and evolve, based upon his experience, European training and his scientific background.

Fiona Brockhoff (Australia) Fiona is one of Australia's most successful designer for achieving an Australian sense of place with elements and plants that are sometimes native, sometimes not, but somehow, always feel Australian.

Trisha Dixon (Australia) A writer and photographer who leads tours to gardens worldwide. She embraces gardens that respond to their climate, are quirky and reflect the owners' passions.

James Hitchmough (UK) James's principal interest is the ecology and management of attractive and sustainable herbaceous plantings. He's a world leader, with international experience, including restoration of Australian native grasslands. He is now part of a $1 billion Melbourne greening project.

Bruce Pascoe (Australia) An Indigenous Australian writer who challenges the myth of the primitive, nomadic hunter-gatherer, believing the world's first farmers may have been Aboriginal, farming crops and grazing animals in harmony with the natural systems. His book, *Dark Emu*, is a revelation, urging us to no longer view landscapes solely through European eyes.

Charles Massy (Australia) Since his own farm was devastated by the eastern Australian drought of 1979-83, Charles has devoted his life to understanding how European and industrial agriculture has led to desertification throughout history. His soil biology research includes dramatic results internationally and provides exciting hope for achieving nutrient-rich properties through regenerative farming.

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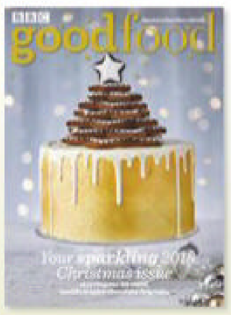
FOOD AND TRAVEL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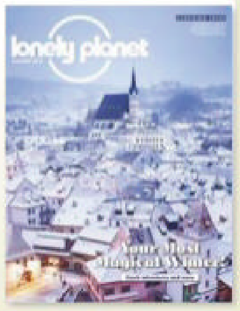
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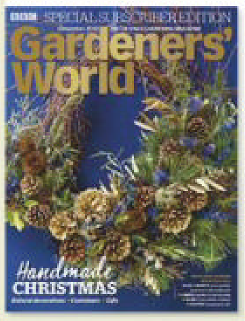
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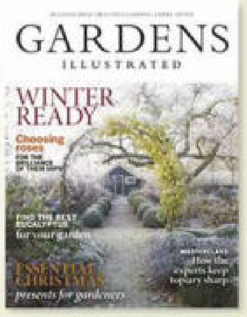
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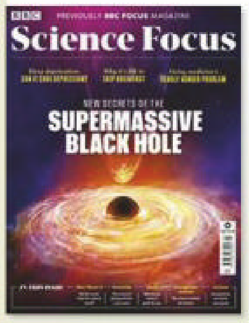
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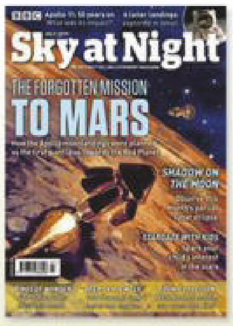
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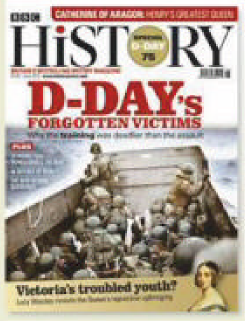
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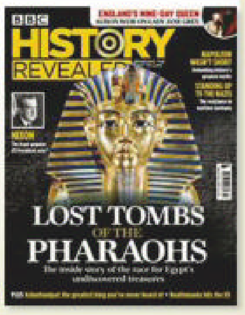
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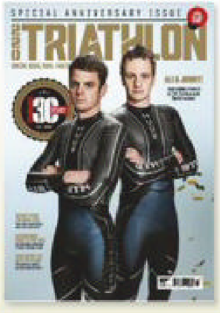
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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED'S

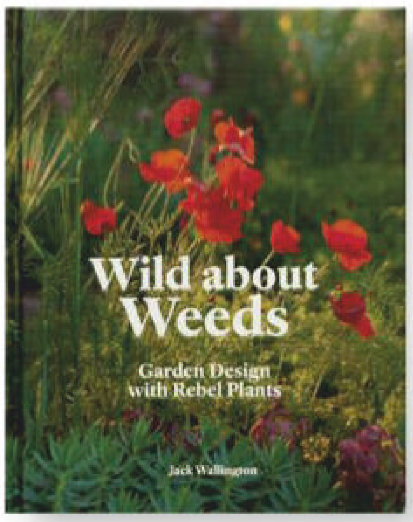
Best gardening books of the year

A look back at some of our favourite books from 2019, plus your chance to win them all

The delicate *Nigella damascena* 'Miss Jekyll' is one of 57 plants author Clare Foster recommends growing from seed in *The Flower Garden*, reviewed on page 94.

SABINA RUBER

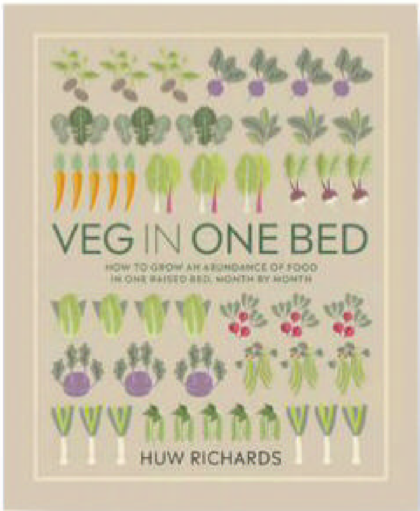
BOOK REVIEWS



WILD ABOUT WEEDS
by Jack Wallington
Laurence King Publishing, £19.99
ISBN 978-1786275301

Jack Wallington wants us all to embrace weeds. They're easy, wildlife-friendly and they fit with the modern enthusiasm for ecological planting. But what is a weed? The word, he suggests, is 'merely a broad and negative term associated with any plant that pops up where we weren't expecting it' and divides weeds into the 'good, the bad and the unappreciated.' His lively text urges us to be more imaginative in our gardens, even to plant daisies in hanging baskets.

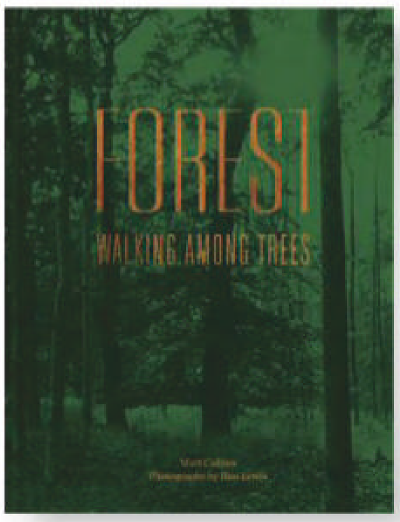
Reviewed by Ambra Edwards in the November 2019 issue.


VEG IN ONE BED
HOW TO GROW AN ABUNDANCE OF FOOD IN ONE RAISED BED, MONTH BY MONTH
HUW RICHARDS

VEG IN ONE BED
by Huw Richards
DK, £14.99
ISBN 978-0241376522

For beginner growers, knowing where to start can be daunting. Huw Richards knows his onions and provides a fool-proof plan of how to produce 19 different vegetable crops from a 3m x 1.2m bed in one season. There is a real sense that Richards is a hands-on gardener with tried-and-tested methods. This is not a book for the coffee table, but a blueprint to follow as the months unfold. Richards has done the hard part so you can enjoy the growing.

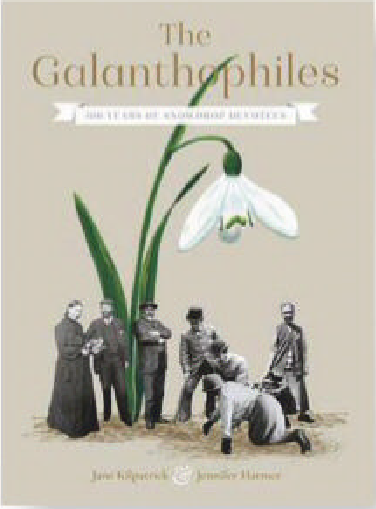
Reviewed by Anna Greenland in the April 2019 issue.



FOREST: WALKING AMONG TREES
by Matt Collins,
photography by Roo Lewis
Pavilion Books, £25
ISBN 978-1911595267

Ten types of common tree – pine, juniper, oak, hornbeam, cherry, beech, birch, chestnut, Douglas fir and poplar – make up the ten chapters, and Roo Lewis's photographs capture the otherworldly feel of these trees. For those of the forest-bathing generation who long to get lost in nature, this is a book in which you can lose your way in the wilderness and come out more clued up on tree species.

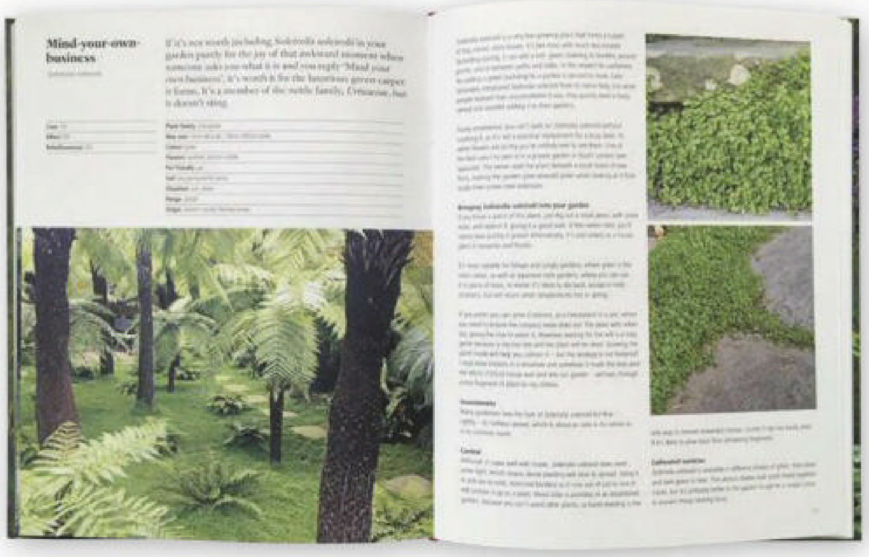
Reviewed by Rosanna Morris in the February 2019 issue.



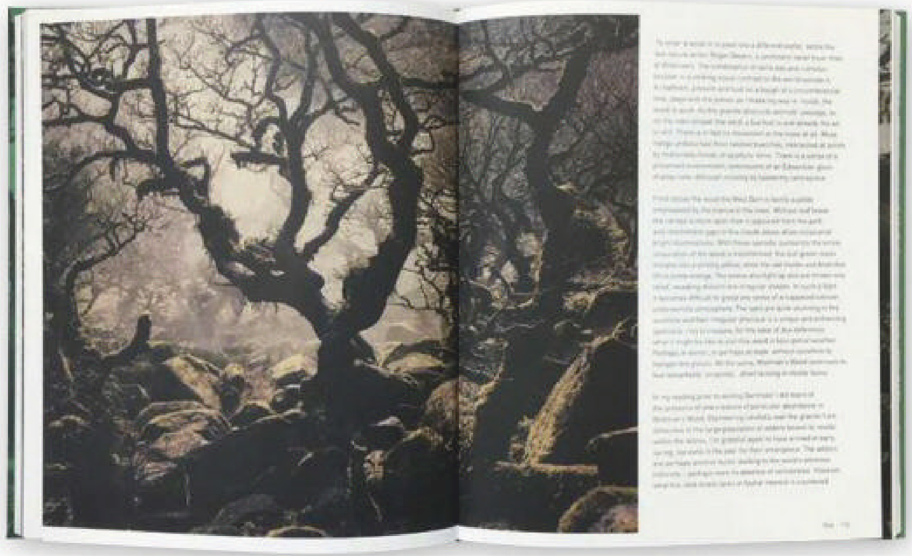
THE GALANTHOPHILES
by Jane Kilpatrick and Jennifer Harmer
Orphons Publishing, £45
ISBN 978-1903360286

This extraordinary book chronicles the development of 'snowdrop mania' from 1854 to the present day. It tells of the unlikely friendship between James Atkins and his neighbour the exuberant ex-Guardsman and big-game hunter Henry Elwes (of *G. elwesii* fame), and more latterly the rival 'snowdrop lunches' of Richard Nutt and Primrose Warburg. A first-class piece of research, well written and immaculately edited.

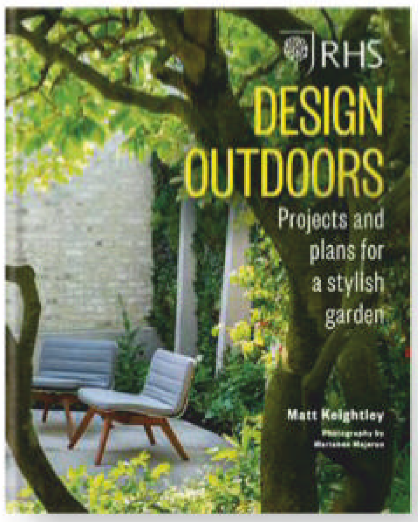
Reviewed by Tim Richardson in the February 2019 issue.



Wild About Weeds.



Forest: Walking Among Trees.

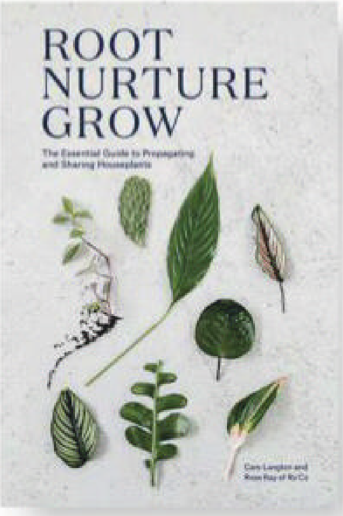

RHS
DESIGN OUTDOORS
Projects and plans for a stylish garden
Matt Keightley

RHS DESIGN OUTDOORS

by Matt Keightley, photography by Marianne Majerus
Mitchell Beazley, £25
ISBN 978-1784724801

Thirty-five gardens are featured, some designed by Matt Keightley, the rest by a collection of more than 20 other designers. Each case study includes a 'design checklist' describing specific features, along with a focus on 'garden details', either a planting combination or a particular material. A garden plan supports each design, enabling the reader to interpret the garden. Ideal for anyone wanting inspirational ideas for a contemporary garden.

Reviewed by Annie Guilfoyle in the May 2019 issue.

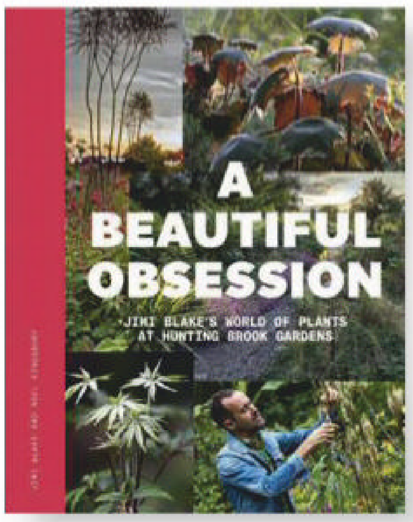

ROOT
NURTURE
GROW
The Essential Guide to Propagating and Sharing Houseplants
Caro Langton and Rose Ray of Ry Co

ROOT, NURTURE, GROW

by Caro Langton and Rose Ray
Quadrille Publishing, £18
ISBN 978-1787132184

A book that takes an inspirational, practical approach, emphasising vegetative propagation methods with chapters on stem and leaf cuttings, grafting, division, runners and offsets plus a useful indoor plant propagation table for over 70 genera. Growing houseplants is often cited as the gateway to 'proper' horticulture for new gardeners, and perhaps it is. I'm not sure it particularly matters, as both enthusiasts and fledgling horticulturists will enjoy this fun and insightful book.

Reviewed by Lucy Bellamy in the January 2019 issue.

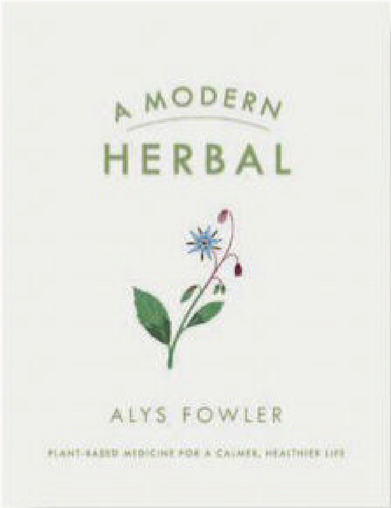

A
BEAUTIFUL
OBSESSION
JIMI BLAKE'S WORLD OF PLANTS AT HUNTING BROOK GARDENS

A BEAUTIFUL OBSESSION

by Jimi Blake and Noel Kingsbury
Filbert Press, £25
ISBN 978-1999734527

Most horticultural books fall into one of two categories: those full of technical information and those that capture the personal experiences individuals have with plants and gardens. This book does a little of both. Co-written by Noel Kingsbury, this book about Jimi Blake's garden is like listening to the musings of two gardeners as they take a stroll, never quite knowing which direction the text will take. What is clear is Blake's unique personality and his appetite to experiment.

Reviewed by Benjamin William Pope in the October 2019 issue.


A MODERN
HERBAL
ALYS FOWLER
PLANT-BASED MEDICINE FOR A CALMER, HEALTHIER LIFE

A MODERN HERBAL

by Alys Fowler
Michael Joseph, £20
ISBN 978-0241368336

For millennia, people have used herbs to support health – a connection many of us have lost. In this book Alys Fowler redresses the void and shares simple ways in which she uses herbs for wellbeing. This modern herbal arms readers of today with the wherewithal to reclaim this practice. For anyone delving into herbs for the first time or those who want to broaden their herbal repertoire in the garden and home, this book is much needed.

Reviewed by Anna Greenland in the August 2019 issue.

Turn the page for your chance to win all 15 books ▷

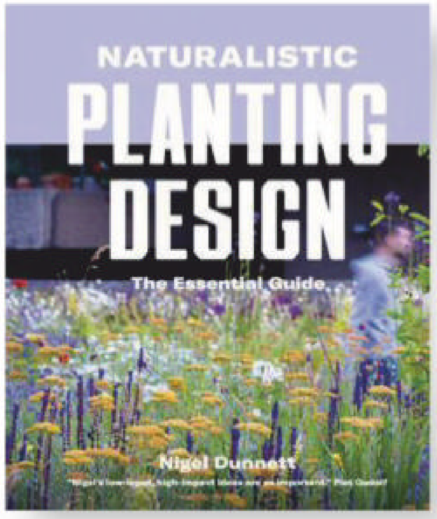
Succulent Leaf Cuttings

Root, Nurture, Grow.

EXTENDING THE SUMMER

A Beautiful Obsession.

BOOK REVIEWS


NATURALISTIC
PLANTING
DESIGN
The Essential Guide
Nigel Dunnett

NATURALISTIC PLANTING DESIGN

by Nigel Dunnett
Filbert Press, £35
ISBN 978-0993389269

Nigel Dunnett trained as an ecologist and his insights are informed by a lifelong study of semi-wild plant communities. The book is generously illustrated by his own stunning photos, complemented by pictures of projects that elucidate how his design principles have been put into practice. While not oversimplifying matters, this book makes an arcane and often misunderstood field of knowledge accessible to all.

Reviewed by Rory Dusoir in the April 2019 issue.

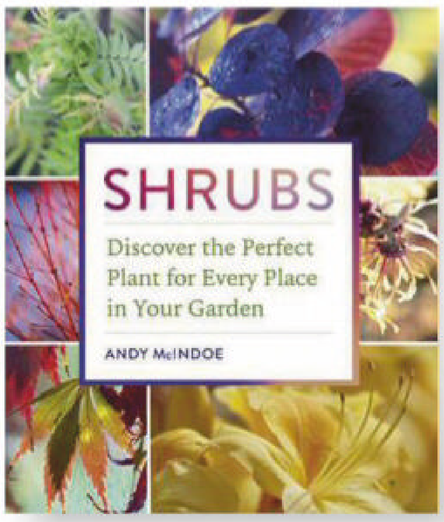
Perfect
Pots
A Practical Guide
SIMON AKEROYD
Perfect
Pruning
A Practical Guide
SIMON AKEROYD

PERFECT PRACTICAL GARDENING GUIDES

by Simon Akeroyd
National Trust, £6.99 each
ISBN 978-1911358718 (Pruning)
ISBN 978-1911358701 (Pots)

Written by Simon Akeroyd, an experienced head gardener at the National Trust, these guides are aimed mainly at budding gardeners who are ready to tackle some practical gardening tasks. They're well written with a great depth of knowledge, and the author's friendly tone inspires trust. *Perfect Pruning*, for example, will inspire the confidence to tackle all kinds of tricky shrubs and climbers.

Reviewed by Joshua Sparkes in the July 2019 issue.

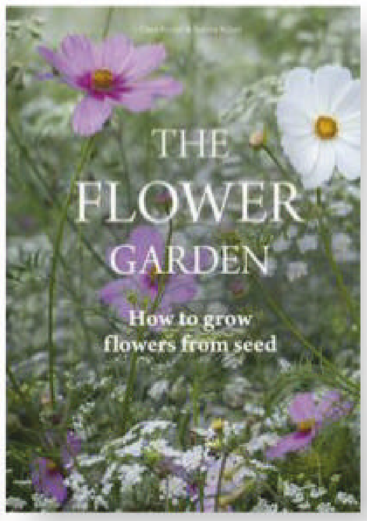

SHRUBS
Discover the Perfect
Plant for Every Place
in Your Garden
ANDY McINDOE

SHRUBS

by Andy McIndoe
Timber Press, £24.99
ISBN 978-1604697674

We've all now become familiar with the idea that there is a plant for every situation, and in this book Andy McIndoe clearly sets out what those plants are and describes them in detail. Each shrub is illustrated with one of the author's own photographs and described in detail, including cultivation or pruning requirements. His advice is clear, practical and honest: the sort of counsel every gardener needs. An invaluable addition to the bookcases of gardeners.

Reviewed by John Hoyland in the March 2019 issue.


THE
FLOWER
GARDEN
How to grow
flowers from seed

THE FLOWER GARDEN

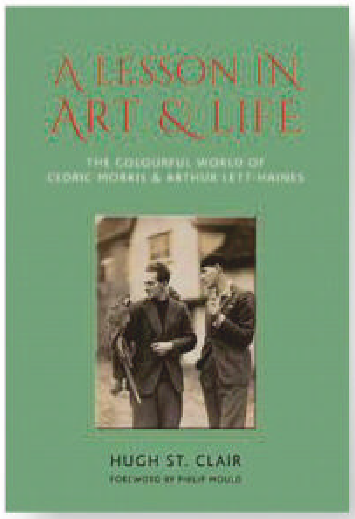
by Clare Foster,
photography by Sabina Rüber
Laurence King, £19.99
ISBN 978-1786274090

Clare Foster, garden editor at *House & Garden*, set herself, the challenge to grow as many annual flowers from seed as she could. The book is a distillation of the findings and successes, listing 57 gorgeous plants to grow cheaply and easily from seed. For experienced growers it is the most stylish of style guides. For novice gardeners it anticipates the delight to be found in sowing a tiny seed and nurturing it to fully grown, blooming glory.

Reviewed by Sorrel Everton in the March 2019 issue.

Naturalistic Planting Design.

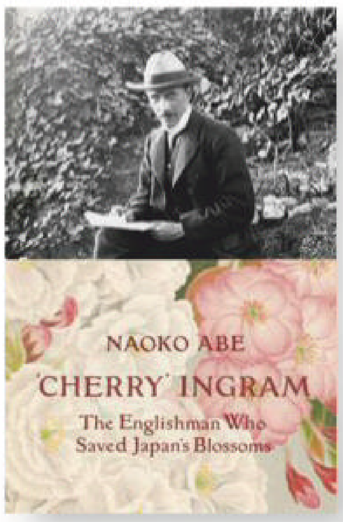
Shrubs.


A LESSON IN ART & LIFE
THE COLOURFUL WORLD OF CEDRIC MORRIS & ARTHUR LETT-HAINES
HUGH ST. CLAIR
FOREWORD BY PHILIP MOULD

A LESSON IN ART & LIFE
by Hugh St Clair
Pimpernel Press, £30
ISBN 978-1910258361

Cedric Morris was one of those mid-century British painters whose work was 'rediscovered' recently – even lesser examples of his flower paintings have been on sale at prices starting at £300,000. Gardeners will know him best for the irises he bred in his garden at Benton End in Suffolk, a number of which are still in cultivation, but as this affectionate but unsentimental biography reveals, he led a rollicking artistic life for years before he discovered horticulture.

Reviewed by Tim Richardson in the July 2019 issue.


NAOKO ABE
'CHERRY' INGRAM
The Englishman Who Saved Japan's Blossoms

'CHERRY' INGRAM: THE ENGLISHMAN WHO SAVED JAPAN'S BLOSSOMS
by Naoko Abe
Chatto & Windus, £16.99
ISBN 978-1784742027

Japanese political journalist Naoko Abe came across the story of cherry-tree expert Collingwood 'Cherry' Ingram while researching a newspaper column. She became entranced by the story of an amateur enthusiast renowned as the man who saved many cultivars of Japanese cherry from extinction. Abe has produced an engaging work that adds illuminating definition to the world about which he wrote.

Reviewed by Jodie Jones in the April 2019 issue.

A Lesson in Art & Life.

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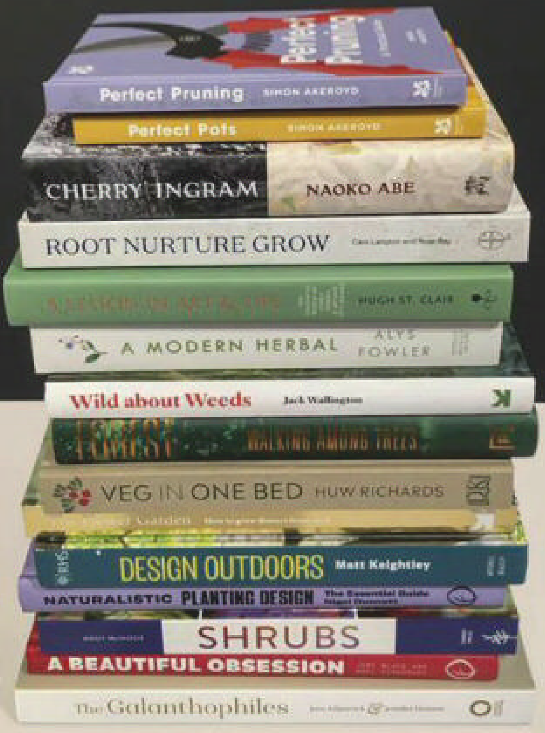
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The Galanthophiles

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Answer the following question and send this form to: *Gardens Illustrated* 280/Best Books 2019, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA.
Alternatively, enter online at gardensillustrated.com/competitions

Among the 'weeds' author Jack Wallington is urging gardeners to reclaim for their gardens in *Wild about Weeds* is *Pilosella aurantiaca*, known among other things as fox and cubs. Which of the following is not one of its many other common names?

a) Devil's paintbrush; b) Drunken sailor; c) Grim-the-collier

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CLOSING DATE **8 January 2020***

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*All entries must be received by 11.59pm on 8 January 2020. To enter you must be over 18 and resident in the UK, including the Channel Islands.

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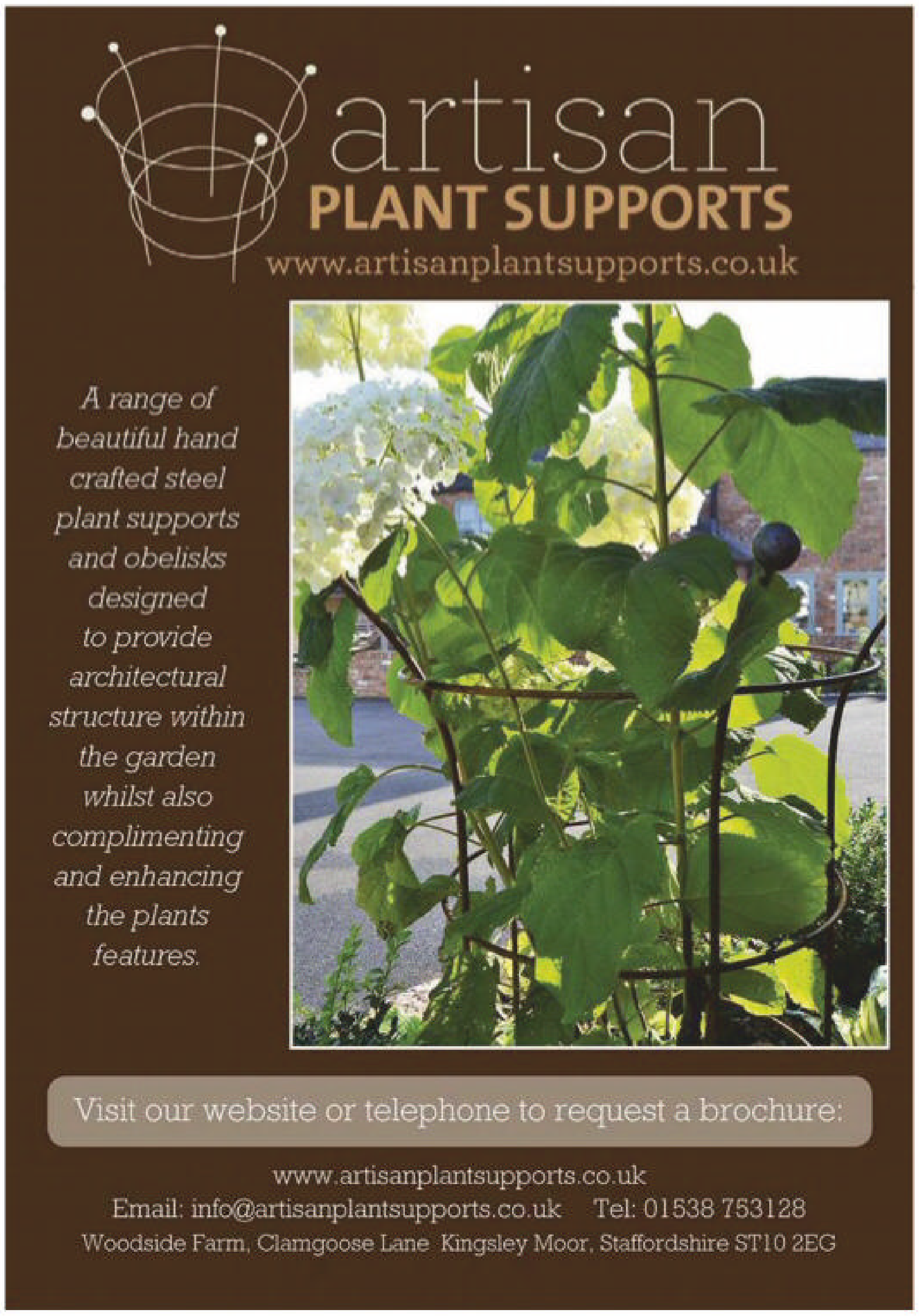

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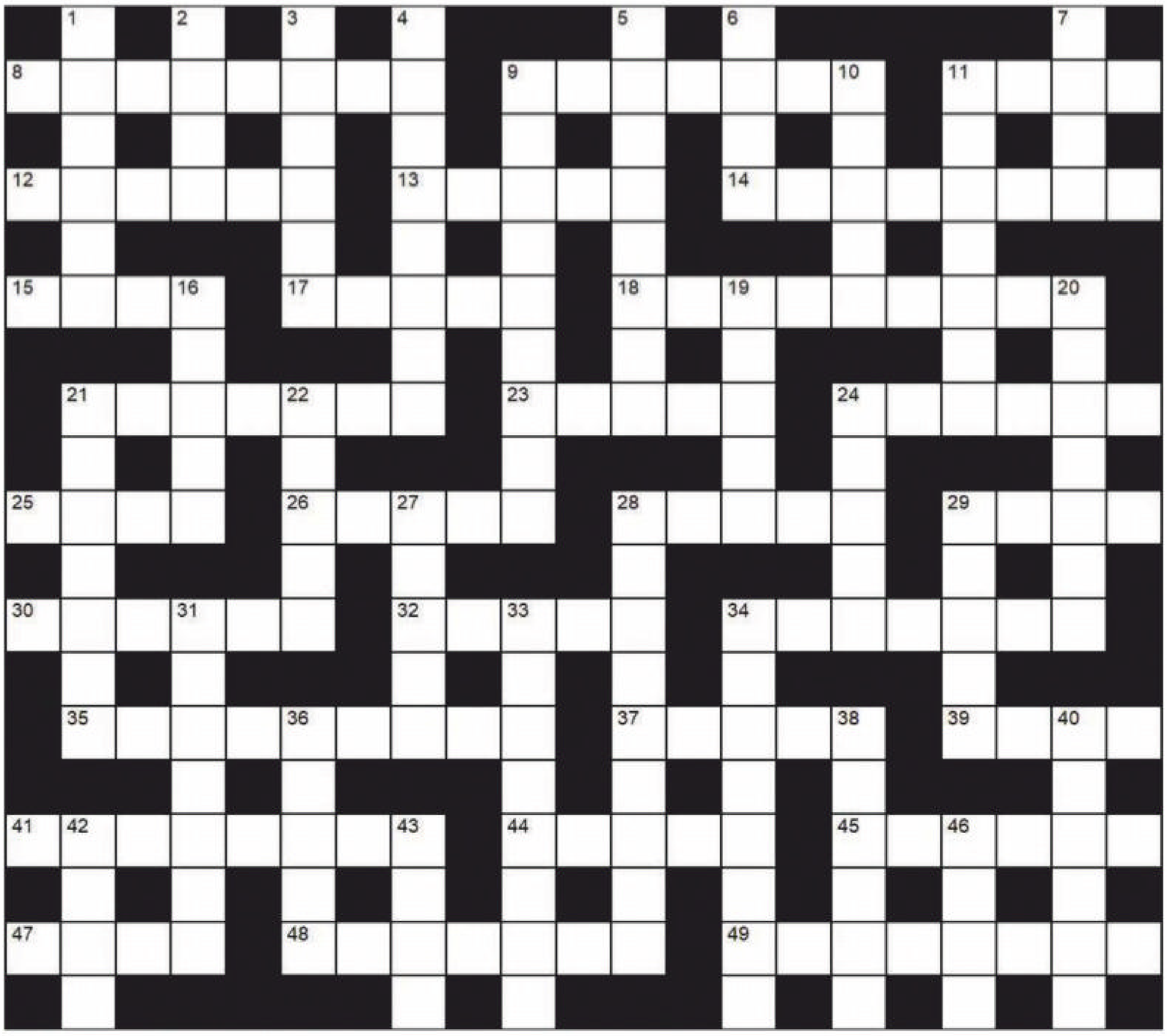

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

SOLUTIONS TO NOVEMBER'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Spit **4** Fireworks **9** Selinum **10** Tubers **11** Damp **12** Alice **13** Blom **14** Halcyon **16** Scales **20** Sparkler **22** Fans **24** Aping **25** Haws **26** Stocks **28** Muscari **29** Centaurea **30** Husk.

DOWN 2 Pistachio **3** Tulip **4** Fantasy **5** Rampion **6** Withers **7** Rib **8** Sirio **13/18** Black Forest **15** Leeks **17** Edelweiss **19** Thapsia **20** Shimmer **21** Augusta **23** Aztec **25** Heath **27** Can.

ACROSS

8/11 Common name of *Viburnum opulus* (8,4)

9 Feathery, like 'Smoke Bush' flowers – riles up moles! (7)

11 See 8 across

12 Floral smells – of little value in USA, we hear (6)

13 Beauty spots? They would ruin your lawn! (5)

14 'Turk's Cap' lily species – among art arrangement (8)

15 Eg fruit tree's short-branched shoot (4)

17 Latin plant form meaning 'yellow'… some absolute adjective (5)

18 Houseplant, *Hippeastrum* genus, popular Christmas gift (9)

21 Splits a perennial for replanting (7)

23 Secure a floppy plant to a support, say (3,2)

24 Francis, Kew's first official plant hunter… seen in Christmas song fest (6)

25 See 44 across

26 The spruce genus (5)

28 That of *Iris foetidissima* is pungent (5)

29 An astrantia with pin-cushion flowers – somewhat aromatic (4)

30 A pink/white penstemon in 'Bird' series: 'Fish Eagle'? (6)

32 Thicket of trees (5)

34 A roseate-coloured eucomis, and a cocktail (4,3)

35 A named rock rose – with seven small companions? (4-5)

37 A bright-orange Mexican sunflower – 'Firebrand'? (5)

39 Division of a leaf (4)

41 If African, it's *Tagetes erecta* (8)

44/25 Haricot vert is its French-style name (5,4)

45 Its caterpillar-like larva feeds on plants – spotted insect? (6)

47 Device to hold floral arrangements… and amphibian (4)

48 Genus of Jerusalem cross and Sticky catchfly (7)

49 ___ x *fraseri*, aka Christmas Berry, and 'Red Robin' (8)

DOWN

1 Some think capsicum is a type of fungus! (3-3)

2 Named tulip with lavender-edged white flowers – good, new sort (4)

3 Pendent inflorescence eg of love-lies-bleeding' (6)

4 'Jingle Bells' is a cultivar of this climber with fluffy seedheads (8)

5 Succulent-leaved herb – possibly leaps urn! (8)

6 Bulbous underground stem of eg gladiolus (4)

7 Capital European city's pale violet-blue agapanthus (4)

9 Class of rose smaller than *Floribunda* – not a phyla alternative (9)

10 As Foremost potatoes are, seasonally (5)

11 A deep red-purple saxifrage – 'Fab Four'? (7)

16 *Gardeners' World* presenter Sarah's last dark-purple *Geranium phaeum* (5)

19 First fruit consumed in a garden? (5)

20 A dwarf, white French lavender – formed after wintry fall? (7)

21 Applies eg manure – gets in the habit? (7)

22 A deep-red rhododendron – a help to 35 across? (5)

24 Eg 'Galia' ___ in the *Cucumis* genus (5)

27 After Christmas, they're *Schlumbergera* plants (5)

28 Fragrant, colourful flowers – as you might describe mangetouts? (5,4)

29 A named lily from China, aka King's Lily… awfully large! (5)

31 Shouting encouragement… for what cuttings should be doing (7)

33 A yellow hybrid tea rose and famous work by Grieg (4,4)

34 Dad, right, clips these root vegetables (8)

36 A circular cluster eg of leaves or petals (5)

38 Blue-flowering herb – last of comfrey in shops, perhaps (6)

40 ___ *perennis*, the common daisy (6)

42 A dwarf, winter-hardy kale – and curly, bushy hairstyle (4)

43 Weed of genus *Rumex* found near nettles? (4)

46 Young bare-root sapling – it might be cracked! (4)

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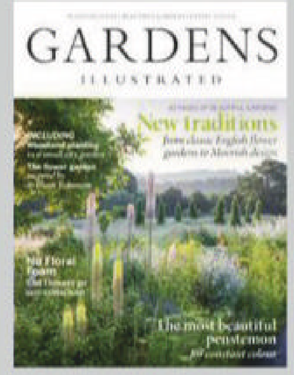

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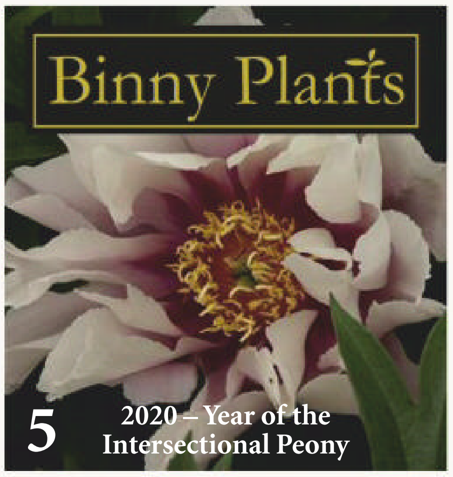

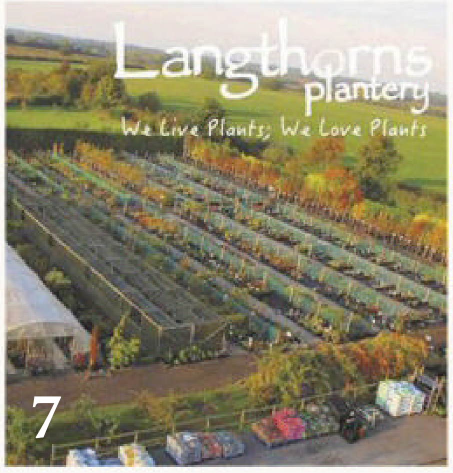

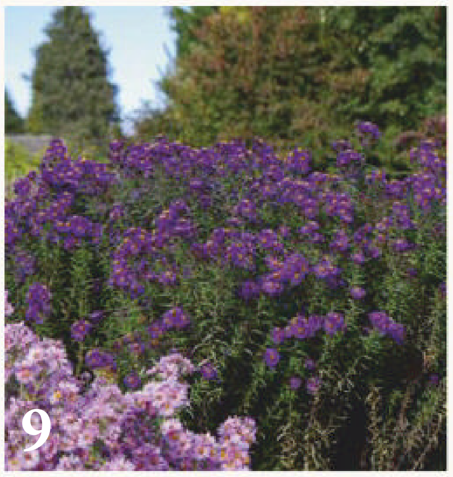

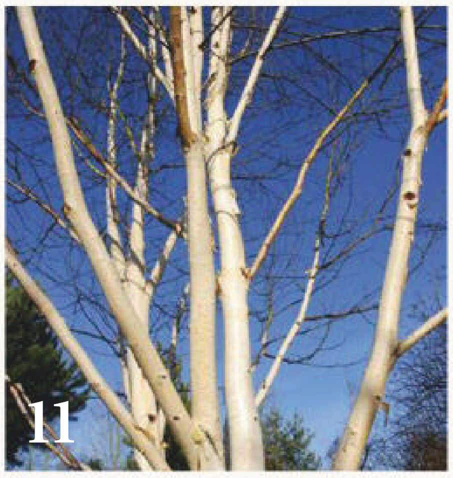

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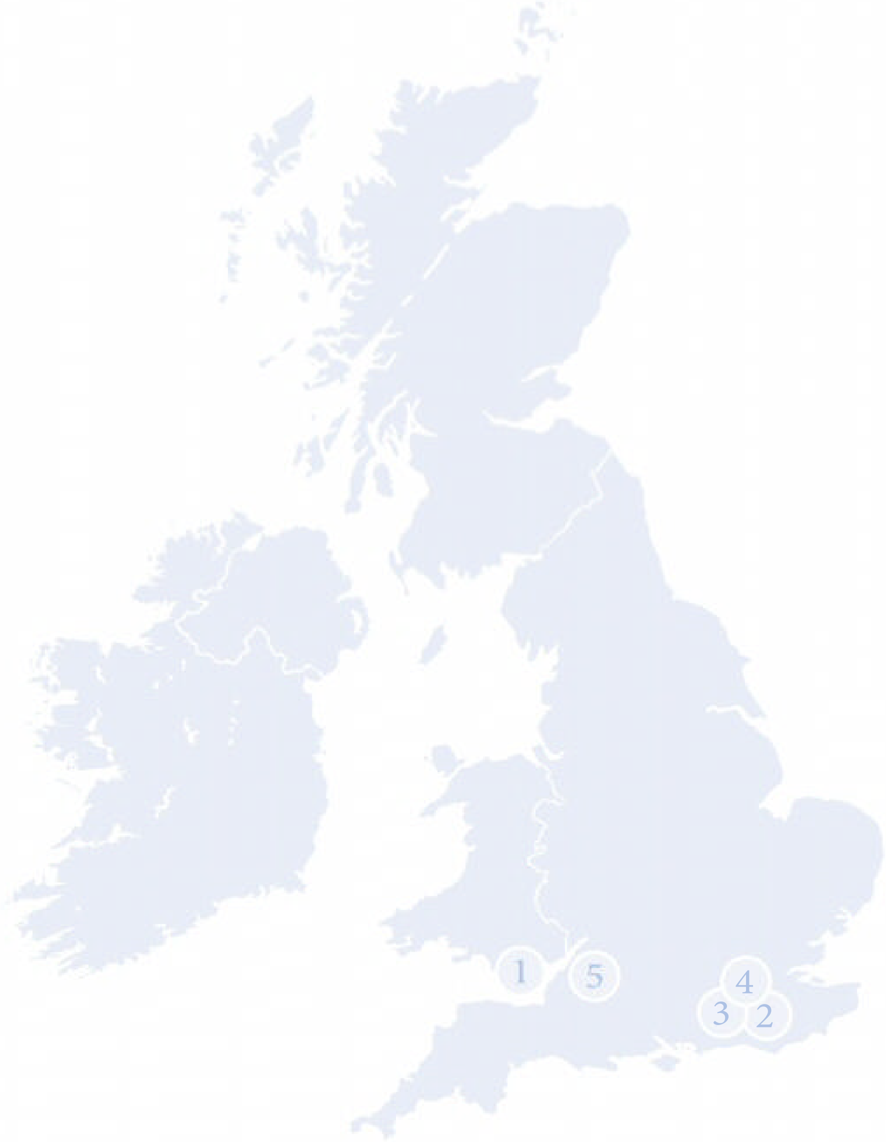

1 DYFFRYN GARDENS

Winter in the garden is when the bones are laid bare. Structure is the real star at this time of year – the ornate stone work of the Pompeian garden, the architectural majesty of fine trees. Or warm up among the orchids and cacti in the tropical glasshouse before continuing your winter adventure.

Vale of Glamorgan CF5 6SU | 029 20 59 3328 | dyffryn@nationaltrust.org.uk

2 HEVER CASTLE & GARDENS

Walk off the Christmas pudding in the gardens, where the warm bark of the redwood trees glows against the winter sky. Towards the castle the yew topiary stands majestically and the Winter Garden displays attractive colours and structures. For the more energetic take a bracing walk around the lake.

Nr. Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NG | 01732 865224 | hevercastle.co.uk

National Trust Images / Andrew Butler

3 NATIONAL TRUST, NYMANS

Brighten long winter days with a stroll along 'Winter Walk', lined with winter flowering shrubs and berries, textured bark and luminous stems. Indulge the senses with beautifully scented daphnes and Hamamelis flowers, subtly coloured and strongly perfumed. In midwinter spot snowdrops and cornus.

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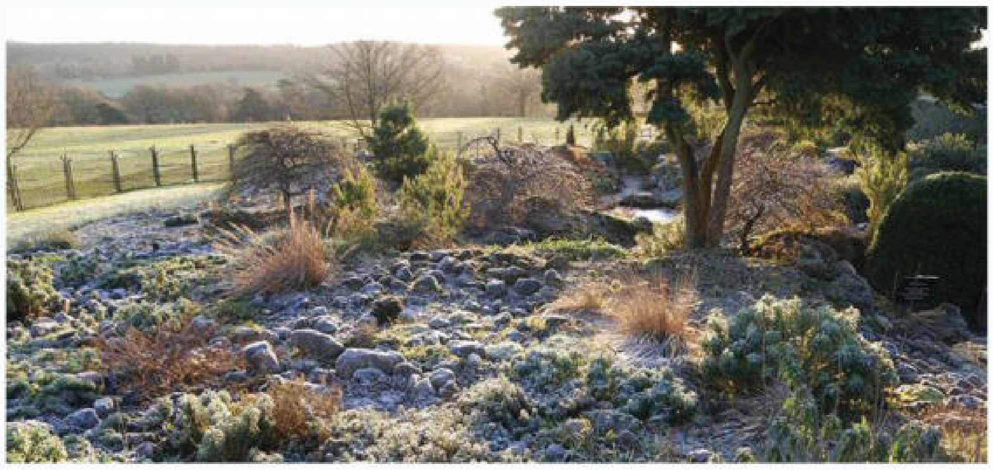

4 EMMETTS GARDEN, NATIONAL TRUST

The views from the garden alone are well worth making a visit for, more and more viewpoints open up over the winter months creating better vistas across the Weald of Kent and beyond. Wander through to the south garden full of exotic and rare trees and shrubs from across the globe.

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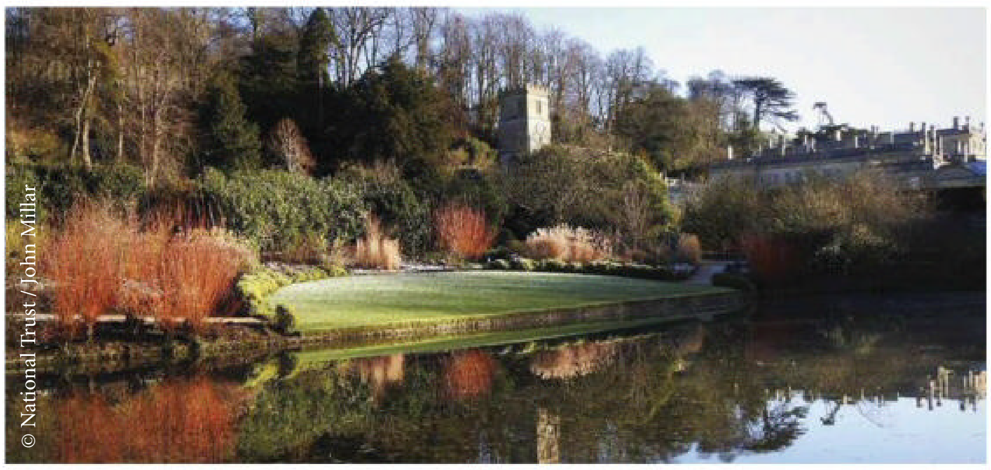

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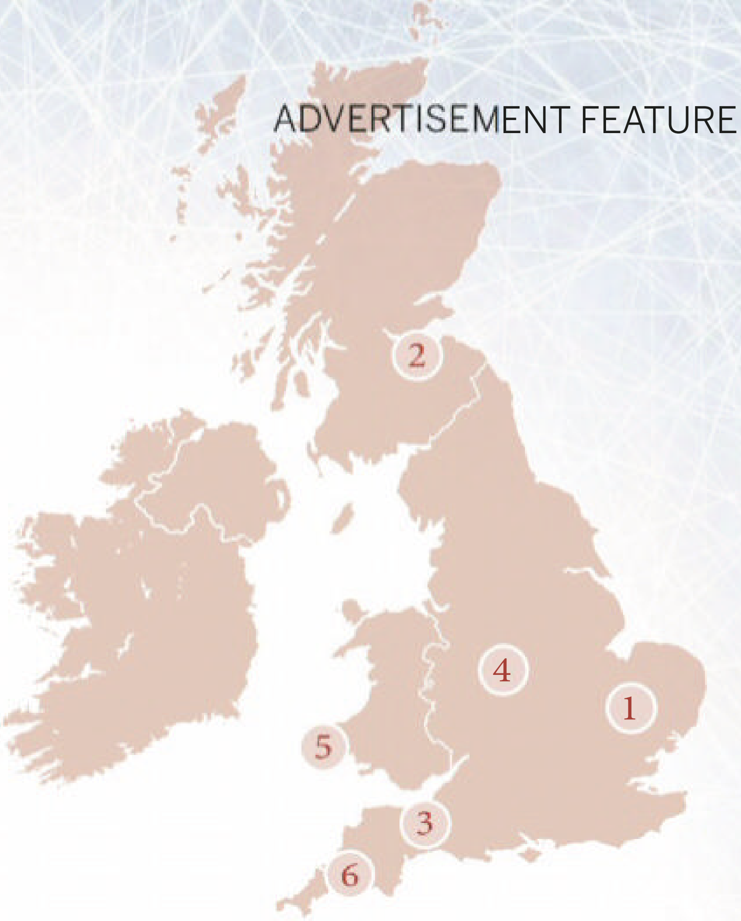
5 DYRHAM PARK, NATIONAL TRUST

Winter is one of the best seasons to drink in the structural planting, clipped formal topiary and idyllic ponds of the formal West Garden, which is being sensitively developed as a 21st-century garden with echoes of the 17th-century. Open daily from 10am–4pm (last entry 3pm), with regular garden tours.

Dyrham Park, near Bath, Gloucestershire SN14 8HY | nationaltrust.org.uk

Christmas DAYS OUT

Get in the festive spirit with these fantastic seasonal excursions



1. ANGLESEY ABBEY

Enjoy Anglesey Abbey's new 1960s Christmas event, Tinsel & Tweed, for a magical day out. While you are there, why not take a walk in the renowned Winter Garden, best known for its striking silver birches. This event is included in admission costs, but pre-booking is essential either online or via our box office: 0344 249 1895.

nationaltrust.org.uk/AngleseyAbbey
01223 810080

2. ROSSLYN CHAPEL

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rosslynchapel.com | 0131 440 2159

3. RHS GARDEN ROSEMOOR

See the trees, shrubs, water features and sculptures illuminated by dynamic, colour-changing lights on the magical Rosemoor Glow trail. Normal garden admission applies (free for RHS members). Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays from 14 November – 4 January (excluding 26 December) until 8pm.

rhs.org.uk/gardens/rosemoor/whats-on

4. SHUGBOROUGH ESTATE

Visit Shugborough Estate from 30 November for an inspiring festive day out. Enjoy seasonal activities such as carol singing; spend a whole day exploring the estate and admiring its grand and unique Christmas decorations; or simply enjoy a cosy couple of hours in the mansion and tea-rooms.

nationaltrust.org.uk/shugborough-estate
01889 880160

5. PICTON CASTLE

Surrounded by a spectacular 40-acre RHS Partner Garden, the 13th century castle has a splendid Georgian wing and was a family home for over 700 years. The rooms feature opulent furnishings and fine works of art. Open all year round, their Victorian Christmas Fair takes place on 24 and 25 November and December offers candle-lit tours and a magical family Christmas event.

pictoncastle.co.uk | 01437 751326

6. PLYMOUTH CHRISTMAS MARKET

Located in the heart of Britain's Ocean City from 28 November to 19 December, Plymouth Christmas Market offers a joyful shopping experience. Browse more than 50 stalls housed in wooden cabins, indulge at the Bavarian Bar and street food stands or snap a festive selfie in front of the giant illuminated bauble.

visitplymouth.co.uk

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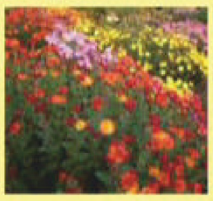

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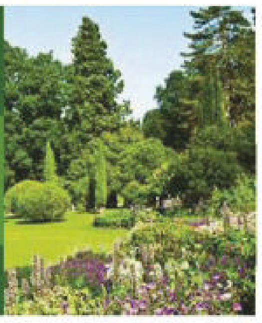

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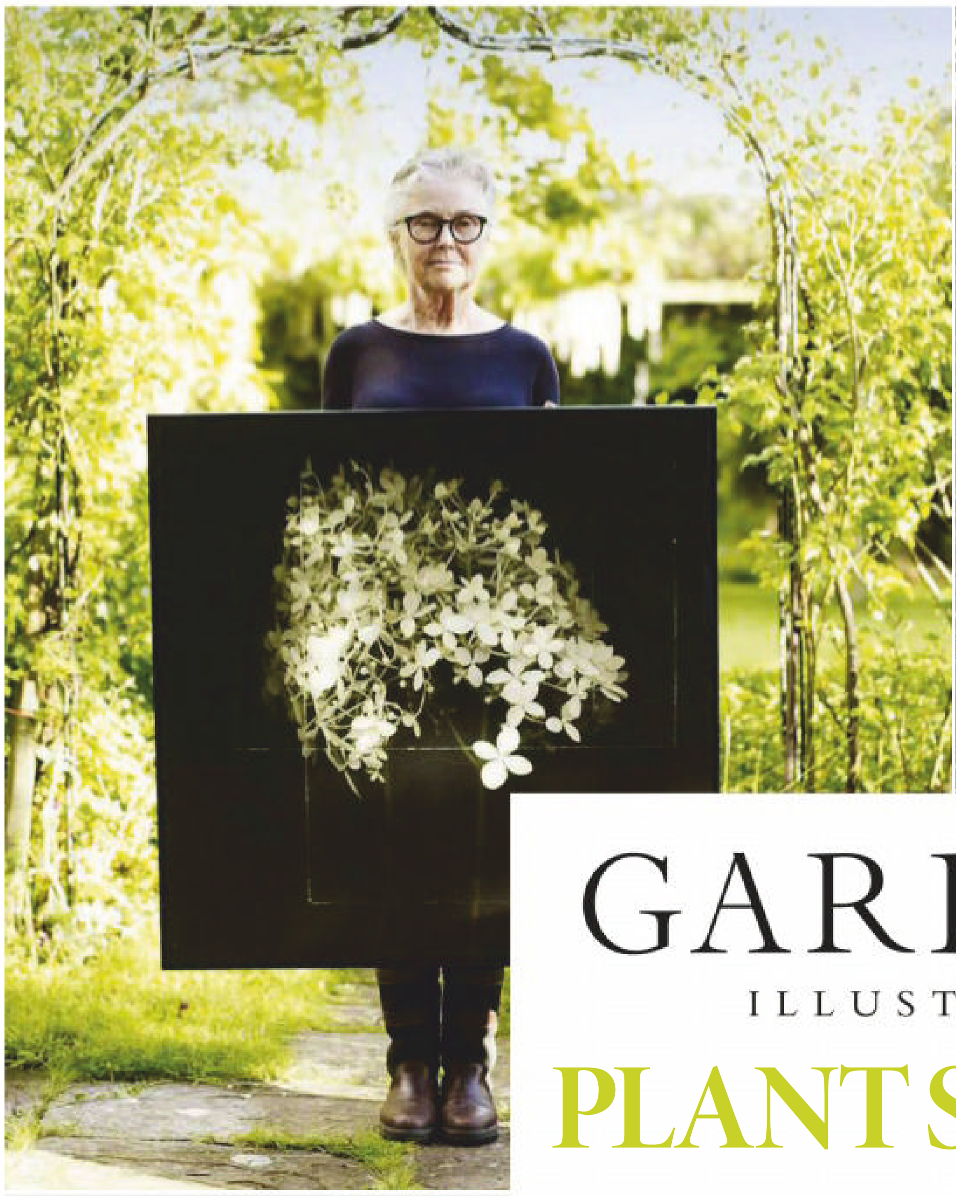

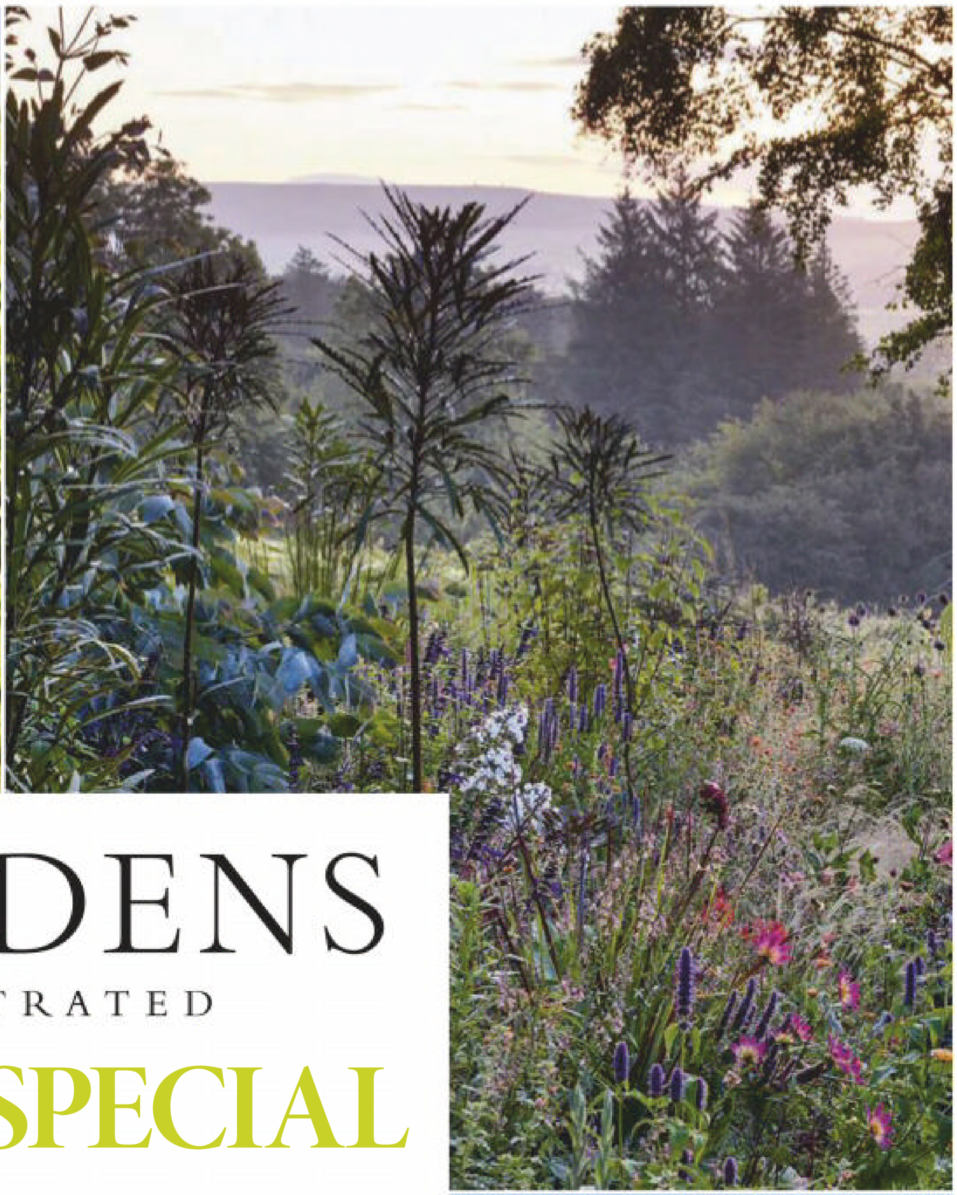

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PLANT SPECIAL

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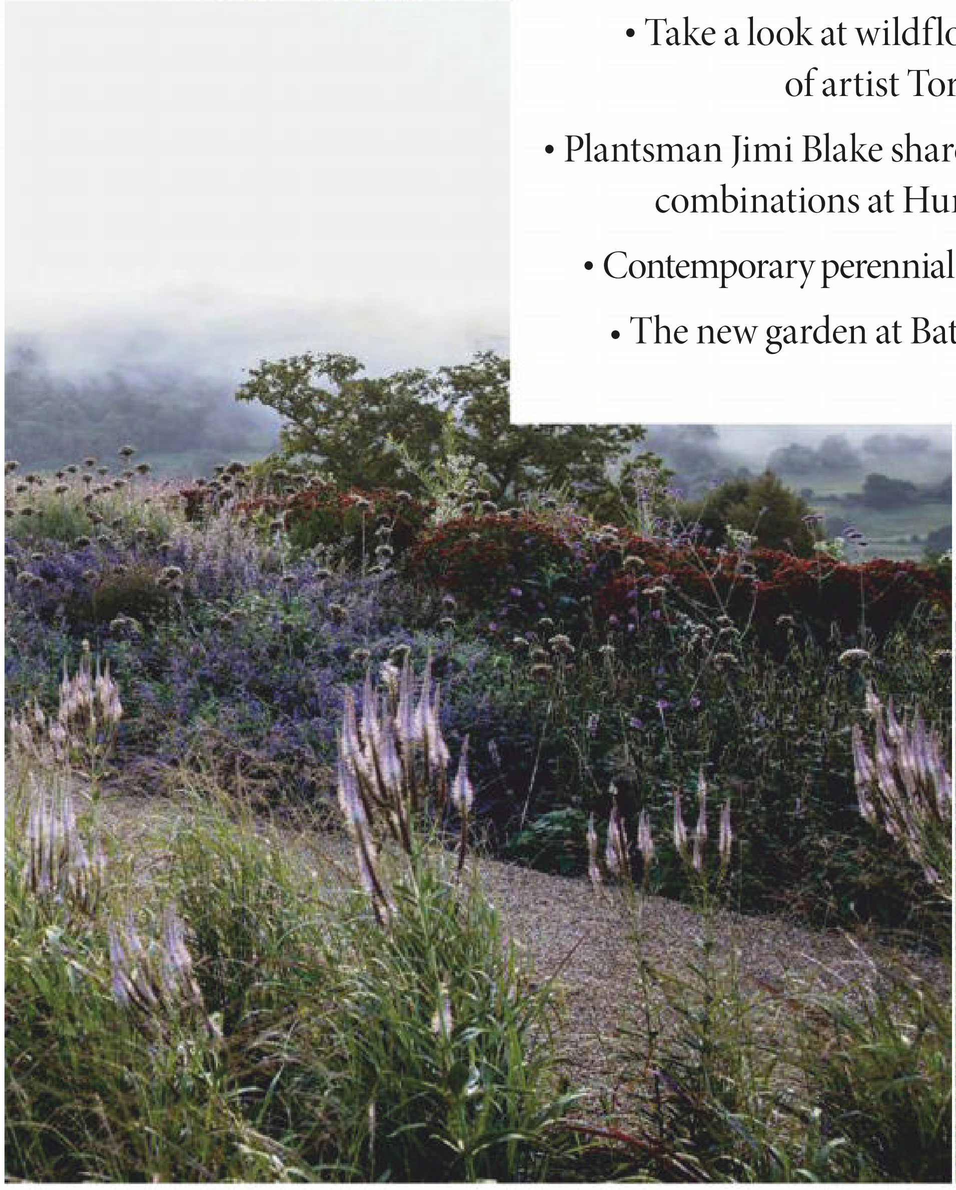
- Plantsman Jimi Blake shares the secrets of his planting combinations at Huntingbrook Gardens
- Contemporary perennial planting in rural Somerset
- The new garden at Bath's American Museum



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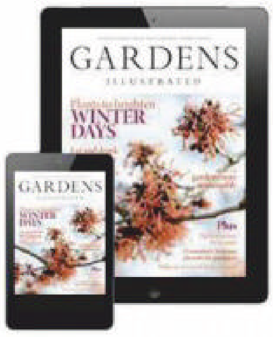

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HOUSEPLANTS

The Great Indoors

With their striking leaves and unfussy habits, umbrella plants or *Schefflera* are ideal plants for growing indoors

WORDS **JESS SNOWBALL**
ILLUSTRATION **AGATA WIERZBICKA**

Umbrella plants or *Schefflera* are a group of epiphytic, hemiepiphytic or terrestrial trees or shrubs found in the family Araliaceae, which is comprised of around 300 accepted species. They can be found in Central and Southern America, parts of Asia and Australia in tropical forests at mid to high elevations.

What draws houseplant enthusiasts to *Schefflera* are their palmate compound leaves that come in an array of beautiful shapes and sizes depending on the species, resembling the fingers and palm of a hand with a number of leaflets attached together at the centre.

There are two species of *Schefflera* suited to growing indoors. Both originate from lower down in the canopy of rainforests and prefer indirect, bright light. They are also adapted to the drier environments and don't need high humidity to thrive.

Schefflera actinophylla is a multi-stemmed, hemiepiphytic tree that grows up other trees with up to 15 leaflets per leaf. It originates from Australia, the Pacific Islands and Java, and can grow up to 15m. In a pot it won't get quite this big but given the right conditions it can quickly outgrow its space, so a more popular option is *Schefflera arboricola.* Known as the dwarf umbrella tree, this is a smaller version of *S. actinophylla* that originates from the south Asian forests of Taiwan and Hainan and can grow to more than 3m indoors. It too is multi-stemmed, and pinching out will encourage a bushier, more stable plant. Plants produce no hard wood and are prone to snapping easily so be careful when wiring and shaping stems, choosing the younger shoots.

There are various cultivars of *S. arboricola,* some with variegated or golden colourings to their leaves. *Schefflera arboricola* variegated, for example, has patches of cream, which generally run around the ends of leaves but can also cover the whole leaf, while *Schefflera arboricola* 'Gold Capella' has streaks of yellow running through its leaves.

Cultivation

Growing *Schefflera* at home is straightforward. Like most plants that originate from the understorey of rainforest canopy they love bright but indirect light. If grown in a slightly darker place they will just grow more slowly and plants may become drawn and leggy. Turn your plant every week to keep it straight and prevent it from falling as it leans over towards the light. *Schefflera* are forgiving plants for forgetful waterers but overwatering can cause root and stem rot.

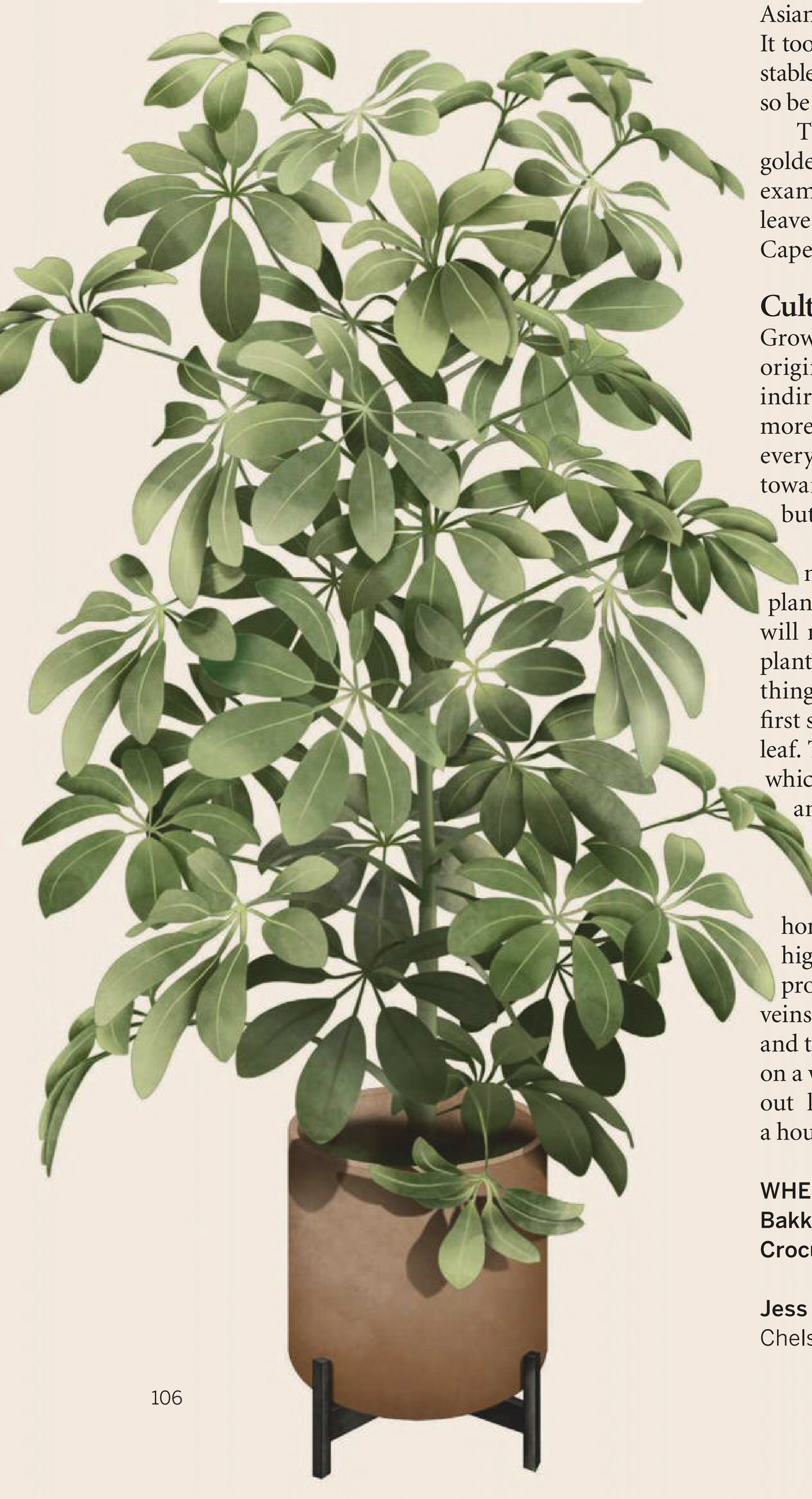
Schefflera can be prone to pest attack, particularly from spider mites and soft scale insects. Spider mites feed by piercing and sucking plant tissue and thrive in dry conditions. During hotter weather, they will reproduce quickly so check regularly – in fact checking over your plant whenever you water to pick up problems early is one of the best things you can do with all houseplants to keep them healthy. To spot the first signs of spider mite, look out for speckled chlorosis on the top of the leaf. Turn it over, and if you look closely you will be able to see the mites, which are about 1mm long. Treat with soapy water on a cloth or spray, and monitor closely in the following few weeks. You may need to repeat this treatment to stop eggs from hatching.

Soft scale insects feed by sucking sap from the plant tissues. When they feed they excrete a sticky, sugary substance called honeydew, which attracts a fungus known as sooty mould. They are highly active crawlers before they permanently settle with their protective shell and can be found particularly along the midrib and veins of the leaves. Look out for sticky shiny patches on the leaf surface, and treat by wiping or picking them off and keep checking back for more on a weekly basis. If a pest becomes established, it is always worth cutting out leaves or pruning out heavily infested areas, and always move a houseplant with a pest away from others in your collection. □

WHERE TO BUY – ONLINE SUPPLIERS
Bakker bakker.com
Crocus crocus.co.uk

Jess Snowball is glasshouse manager at the Chelsea Physic Garden, London.

SCHEFFLERA ARBORICOLA



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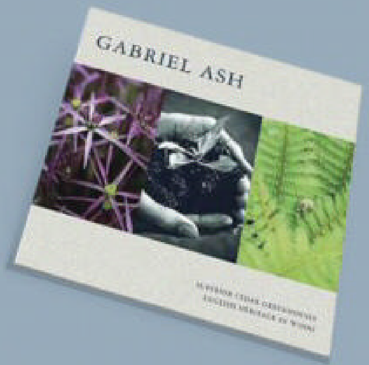

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